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The Week

MYSTERY hides the causes of the recent rapid fall of the pound sterling in the exchange markets. Who is selling pound exchange and why? Unless we know that, we cannot tell what the ultimate results are likely to be. One possible explanation is that foreign investors in British securities and short-term paper, who put their money there for relative safekeeping, have become frightened by the recent financial scandals, by the decline in British trade and employment or by the prospect of a political overturn, and are withdrawing their funds. Another is that this is a speculative raid, perhaps exploiting a genuine flight of capital. A third is that the government authorities themselves desire a further fall in the pound. Though they may not have initiated the movement, they did nothing to stop it, at least for many days, as they could have done by throwing the exchange-equalization fund into the breach. Certainly there are motives that might lead them to look with equanimity on this movement. Now that the Supreme Court has decided, dollar devaluation will not be annulled. At the same time American prices have not risen sufficiently to offset what the British believe is an overvaluation of the pound. So far, the American fund apparently has not been used to halt the downward movement. Whatever the motives of governmental authorities, a continuation of the present break might force the gold bloc to surrender, and thus bring nearer an international stabilization agreement. Can this be the design? It is at least conceivable.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt's proposal to stop the subsidies to shipping concealed in contracts for carrying mail, as well as the "loans" to shipbuilders, will, if enacted into law, end a scandalous situation. Exploitation of government by business for its own profit is not uncommon, but it is comparatively rare that the government virtually carries a business which could scarcely exist without its patronage, and which is useless except to its owners. There has been a large surplus of shipping ever since the War. Not only to keep empty bottoms sailing the seas but also to build new ones that must be operated at a tremendous loss, is an economic crime. The whole business has, in addition, given rise to a lot of shady practices. The President wants to substitute a direct subsidy large enough to keep American ships on essential trade routes and to maintain an American merchant marine for possible war purposes. But will this not continue the old abuses? It is worth considering whether, for peace purposes, it is not better economy to use the most efficient shipping available, no matter what flag it flies. If foreign governments want to pay part of our costs of transportation by their own subsidies, why not accept the gift? As for war needs, if we intend to fight the nations with big merchant marines (notably Great Britain), such a war would be disastrous in any case. And there is just the faint possibility that American ship-owners could be just as clever as foreigners in making shipping pay.

THE Hearst papers are publishing a series of featured articles, illustrated with photographs, by one Thomas Walker. They portray terrible famine conditions in Soviet Russia. It is well known that there was famine in parts of the country two years ago, but these articles give the impression that it has existed in recent months. It is interesting that Mr.

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Lindsay Parrott, correspondent in Moscow of the International News Service, a Hearst organization, gave an interview to Izvestia on February 26, 1935, in which exactly contrary statements were made. Two long trips to important agricultural regions were the basis of the following conclusion: "The peasants are selling bread, eggs and dairy products. This means that there is a sufficiency of agricultural products. Nowhere in any of the cities or villages visited, nor along the road, did I meet any signs or effects of the famine of which foreign newspapers take delight in writing. And, incidentally, it is just at this time of year that famine, if it existed, would be felt severely." Mr. Parrott described at considerable length the progress he found in the agricultural regions. One is therefore inclined to question Mr. Walker's facilities for observation. According to the Soviet authorities, he was in Russia only thirteen days, entering at Negoreloie, on the Polish border, October 12, 1934, and leaving from Manchuli, on the eastern border, October 25, 1934. This means that his observations must have been made from the window of a transcontinental train. The Hearst papers say he was in Russia in the spring of 1934, but the Soviet authorities can find no record of this visit. Why does not Mr. Hearst, if he wants to prove the authenticity of his writer, publish a facsimile of his visa?

EVERYONE in the world above the age of ten must know by now that Japan intends to dominate all of eastern Asia, including China. She will use guns where she has to, financial and economic pressure where that is sufficient. It is reasonable to suppose that forced loans to the government of Chiang Kai-shek will form a part of that program, despite the recent routine denials from Tokyo that such loans are contemplated. From Washington come reports of an international loan to China in which the United States, Great Britain and perhaps other countries would participate. Whether Japan would be invited to become one of these "other countries" is not known. This plan is only tentative, and we may hope that it will come to nothing. The only thing to be said in favor of such a venture is that it might be better for the Chinese than a loan floated solely by Japan. There is no evidence that either of these loans, made at this time, would in any way increase the well-being of the great mass of the Chinese people. China is torn by revolution and civil war, it has three governments in various areas, and there is an accumulating amount of evidence that the Nanking regime, to which the international loan would be made, has sold out to the Japanese. The proposal for a loan is not in any way concerned with the welfare of China. The loan would be part of a British-American offensive against Japan, of a piece with the wrecking of the London Naval Conference and the unrestricted shipbuilding race upon which the three countries are about to enter. As such, it would be a prelude to war, and should be opposed by everyone who believes that such a war would be a piece of unredeemed folly.

THE Twentieth Century Fund some time ago employed a group of experts to study the relation between government and the labor problems of private industry. This group of experts has now made its report, on the basis of which a special committee, also appointed by the Twentieth Century Fund, has issued recommendations for new legislation. The committee asks "a permanent and comprehensive federal labor law," which would roughly resemble the pending Wagner bill. It would set up a Federal Labor Commission to enforce the law and maintain collective-bargaining agreements under it. The committee approves of complete freedom of organization for employees, with collective bargaining in which any union representing a majority of the workers would be entitled to speak for all of them—thus throwing into the discard President Roosevelt's proportional-representation scheme that he has tried to set up in the automobile industry.

WHILE the committee's report is on the whole sound, it contains one highly undesirable clause. It should be illegal, the committee says, "for anyone to intimidate or coerce employees in the free exercise of their right to organize and to choose their own representatives for collective bargaining." This sounds fair and reasonable, but in practice it would undoubtedly be used as a club to prevent independent unions from enrolling the workers in a plant against the will of the employer. All that the latter would need to do would be to go to the nearest judge and declare his workers were being coerced. Union activity would then be suspended indefinitely and union funds perhaps impounded while the matter was fought out in court. Everyone knows how cases of this kind can be delayed, and that in labor struggles, delay is equivalent to a victory for the employer. The most charitable explanation is that this phrase must have got into the recommendations by inadvertence.

ABOUT halfway down its eastern side, the continent of Africa bulges out in a large triangle, the apex of which is slightly south of the southern end of the Red Sea. This triangle contains Ethiopia, which, however, does not touch the sea at any point. Along the coast of the northern side is the Italian colony of Eritrea, then come small French and British possessions; along the entire southern side of the triangle the coast is occupied by Italian Somaliland. The western border of Ethiopia is the Sudan, containing the upper reaches of the Nile, which are partly within Ethiopia herself, enabling that country to control the waters that are necessary for the cotton plantations of Egypt. Ethiopia, which is largely a wild mountainous area, is extremely rich in untapped mineral resources, including coal, iron, sulphur, copper, gold, platinum and oil. It has also tremendous agricultural possi-

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bilities, the soil being adapted for producing great quantities of wheat, cotton, rubber, tobacco and coffee. It now exports hides, coffee, wax and ivory.

OVER this territory the Great Powers of Europe have been squabbling for many years. Innumerable treaties have been signed, concessions given, joint rights in projected railways agreed upon. Now, as all the world knows, Italy has embarked upon a military adventure against the Ethiopians—an adventure that may have important consequences for the whole world. The Italians are acting under the terms of an agreement with France and Great Britain, through which they have promised to be "reasonable" in regard to Austria and other European matters, in exchange for a free hand in Ethiopia. You may write your own adjectives describing this bargain, as sordid a piece of cold-blooded imperialism as the world has ever seen. Behind this situation, however, are even larger world issues. For several years, the Ethiopians have been coming into closer contact with the Japanese. Japan has recently taken away from Great Britain the lion's share of Ethiopian foreign trade. Japanese merchants and industrialists are coming into Ethiopia in large numbers. Special tariffs have recently been signed favoring Japan over other countries. The Japanese have leased thousands of square miles of Ethiopian land for the purpose of growing cotton, and large numbers of Japanese immigrants are entering Ethiopia to perform the necessary labor. No color line is being drawn between Japanese and Ethiopians, and both governments are encouraging intermarriage.

THERE can be no doubt that in consenting to Italian aggression in Ethiopia, France and Great Britain had Japan in mind. The world is once again rapidly aligning itself into two armed camps: on one side, Japan, Germany and Poland; on the other, Russia, France, Italy and to a certain extent, Great Britain. The British are now exerting the greatest possible pressure upon the United States to bring us into the second of these groups. If we are anxious to hasten the advent of the next world war, and to make sure that we shall participate from the very beginning, we could not do better than to accept the British invitation—an invitation which, indeed, many people believe we have already accepted, at least in regard to joint naval operations in the Pacific.

THE revolt in Greece is a struggle for supremacy between fascist and constitutional forces. Eleutherios Venizelos, the outstanding figure in this uprising, was easily the most influential man in postwar Greece. He served several terms as Premier of the Greek Republic and went into voluntary exile on the island of Crete last October when he lost the election to President Zaimis. During the last few years Venizelos has become rabidly fascist and anti-Semitic in his political views. In a letter to Hitler he called the German Chancellor the "greatest statesman of our times," the man whose "political, social and economic ideals will rule the world for centuries to come." It has been reported that Venizelos is fighting the monarchist tendencies of the present regime. The issue at stake in this revolt is not monarchism, however, but the liquidation of parliamentary government in favor of an authoritarian, fascist state.

FOREIGN policy also plays its part in the struggle. Venizelos vehemently condemns the participation of the government in the Balkan pact, branding it as a dangerous concession to French domination. Greek newspapers published attacks on Premier Tsaldaris by Venizelos and other prominent fascists not long ago, in which they accused the Premier of selling out to France. Ever since the end of the World War Venizelos has consistently supported British interests in Greece against the French. The former ruling house of Gluecksburg is closely related to the British royal family. Not long ago the British younger son, Prince George, married the Greek Princess Marina. Probably London is—let us say—not displeased over the turn events have taken. A victory of the insurgents may have an important effect on the Balkan constellation. France, who has barely succeeded in restoring her waning influence along the Danube, does not want England's foothold strengthened. To her it is not a consoling thought that Great Britain may become the bridge for German influence in the European southwest.

SOME forty persons were killed and as many wounded in the recent revolt of Croatian peasants against the Belgrade dictatorship. After King Alexander's assassination, the Croatians had been led by Prince Regent Paul to believe that Jugoslavia's minorities, the Croatians and the Slovenes, would be allowed to participate in the national government. The dismissal of the Skupstina and the announcement of elections to be held in May appeared to confirm the promises of the new regime. The Croat leader, Dr. Machek, successor to the martyred Stefan Raditch, and the Serbian peasant leader Dragoljub Jowarowitch agreed to head a joint farmer ticket. But this was not what the dictatorship had bargained for. Premier Yevtich then announced that only the government party would be allowed to nominate candidates. Dr. Machek was ordered to discontinue his campaign at once, under penalty of arrest. He is, however, still at large and continues to attack Yevtich and Prince Paul in the plainest language. A few days ago he promised in a mass meeting in Zagreb that the Croatians would conduct their own elections with their own candidates or die in the attempt. Since then the government has intimated in the semi-official press that elections would "probably be postponed until calm has been restored." But local revolts in the Croatian districts indicate that Jugoslavia's peasant rebellion is more than a momentary flare-up.

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Inflation: How to Know It

THE CHIEF result of the Supreme Court's gold decision seems to have been to revive the discussion of the imminence of inflation in the United States. Again we have the old conservative fears paraded; again the various movements for monetary and credit panaceas are warming up their motors. What does it all amount to? Is there a danger (or a hope) of inflation, and, if so, how will it come about?

What inflation is: Inflation is so broad a term that it is well to define it before talking about it. Anyone may define it as pleases him, but for present purposes we think the relevant definition should run as follows: Inflation is a marked and progressive rise in commodity prices, which is not accompanied, at least in its later stages, by an equivalent increase in production and consumption of goods and services. The main characteristics of a full-blown inflation are: (1) the purchasing power of bondholders, of those with relatively fixed incomes of other sorts, such as pensions and salaries, and of wage earners, is decreased for the benefit of the purchasing power of profitmakers and speculators; and (2) when it stops—as it must stop in the end—there must follow a reaction and depression.

What causes inflation: When there is an increase in the amount of money being used for the purchase of goods and services (or an increase in the velocity of its circulation) that is greater than the increase in the physical production and sale of goods and services, prices rise. (By money we mean not only currency and bank notes, but bank loans and short-term credit of all kinds.) When the circulation keeps on increasing after production has virtually reached its upper limit, prices go on rising without any increase in real income, and the scourges of inflation are upon us.

Certain corollaries of this statement are very much worth noting. Nothing you can do to money or credit that does not lead to an increase in the total being *spent* will cause inflation. You can devalue the dollar or go off the gold standard or go on to the dirt standard without causing any effect whatever on commodity prices, and hence on the real value of the dollar, unless more dollars are actually spent. Trillions of dollars of paper money may be printed without any effect, so long as these dollars remain in the Treasury or in bank vaults. And bank reserves may be increased by any conceivable amount without effect, so long as the total of bank loans and investments does not increase.

The second corollary is that even an increase of money being *spent* does not necessarily cause either a price rise or an inflation. If the increase in spendings is paralleled by an increase in the quantity of goods and services being bought, there is no rise in prices.

What are the sources of spending? If only spending, and spending at a faster rate than production, can bring inflation, it is important to inquire what the chief sources of spending are. Who can start enlarging expenditures? You and we cannot start unless somebody raises our pay or lets us get deeper into debt. The vast majority in the country cannot spend more by dipping further into their savings; their savings, if they ever had any, have been dipped dry. The only two sources of spending worth talking about are business and government. Business can spend more, if it wants to produce more and can get loans from the banks or from investors. And government can borrow and spend.

Now an increase in business spending means one thing and only one thing—business revival. Therefore we cannot have inflation by the business-spending route without having business revival as a starter. How about inflation by the government-spending route? It is obvious that if business spendings contract while government spendings expand, we shall have no inflation—unless government spendings expand enough to more than make up for the business contraction. But that is an absurd way to put it. For government spending goes through business channels, first or last. The more government spends, the more business spends, temporarily at least. It is hardly conceivable, in a non-socialist economic order, that government could spend enough to start inflation without at the same time spending enough to stimulate business into activity. We had a good example of inflation resulting from government spending during and just after the War. Therefore it comes to this: there is no danger (or hope) of inflation during a depression. *There can be no inflation without business activity.*

Will a budgetary deficit cause inflation? Not necessarily. The government can go far into the red without spending enough to make up for the shrinkage of private business during a depression. It isn't the borrowing, but the spending, that has an effect in raising prices. Prices will not go up unless the demand for goods and services exceeds the available supply, and that result can arrive only if combined governmental and business spending increases the total effective demand rapidly and to a marked degree.

However, it is important to note an indirect effect of governmental borrowing. When the government borrows a lot of money, it issues a large amount of bonds and other promises to pay. The greater part of such issues is not bought by individuals and put away in safe-deposit boxes. It is bought by banks. It increases bank reserves. Thus the banks have a large basis on which to erect an expansion of loans. Government borrowing makes possible a growth of bank credit many times larger than the amount the government borrows. The possible ratio is about ten to one. Thus the chief result of large governmental borrowing is a possible inflation through expansion of business credit or

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speculative loans. This effect will not arrive, however, unless business men and speculators borrow freely and unless the banks believe it safe and profitable to lend to them. In other words, it must follow, not precede, business revival.

What is the inflationary result of the reduction of the gold value of the dollar? There is no prompt result, except to the limited extent by which our price level may be affected by a stimulus to our exports or by the higher dollar prices we must pay for imports. But, since the Treasury called in all the gold before the devaluation, and then increased its dollar value 69 percent by devaluation, the government has several billion dollars more to spend, which it does not have to raise by taxes or borrowing. If, as a result, it spends more than it otherwise would have done, it increases demand by just that amount, and can produce a moderate inflationary effect. When it took the gold from the banks, it gave the banks in exchange gold certificates at the old dollar value; therefore bank reserves were not increased by the operation. If, however, the Treasury should now deposit its gold in the banks, it could add just that amount to bank reserves, and the effect of this could be noticeable. Without such improbable action devaluation is not markedly inflationary.

Is there much chance of prompt inflation? It follows from all the above that there is little. Whether one likes it or dislikes it, inflation is not an immediate danger. We need not look for it unless or until business becomes very active. One's estimate of the likelihood of a price rise must depend on one's estimate of the probability of revival. A much greater danger at the moment is that the depression will continue.

If revival comes, is there a danger of inflation? Yes. The government could not bring about much rise in prices when it wanted to check the depression; on the other hand, it may not be able to stop prices rising when business is active and inflation is no longer desired. Credit inflation frequently occurs in a capitalist society; it is normal for revival to rise into boom through overexpansion of credit. We have had inflation while on the gold standard and without any monetary tinkering whatever; we had it in 1919 and 1920. We had it in 1929 and 1930, largely expressed in the capital markets. Now the banks are flooded with excess reserves; we have the basis for an expansion of credit much larger than the country has ever known. If and when prosperity comes, the lessons of the depression are likely to be forgotten. Overconfidence and speculative fever will reappear. The excuse that this depression was wholly abnormal and was caused largely by the War will become the accepted doctrine; people will come to believe that another "New Era" of permanent prosperity has arrived.

In these circumstances, can the government or the central banking authorities control expansion of credit before it becomes dangerous? That is the assumption on which they are now working. In our opinion it is an unwarranted assumption. Only two means of control are now known. One is to increase the rediscount rate of the Federal Reserve Banks and thus discourage borrowing by member banks. But the member banks already have such large reserves that they can about double their loans without borrowing anything. And even if they had to borrow, boom psychology would probably induce them to do so, no matter how high the rate. The other method is for the Reserve Banks to sell government securities on the open market, thus decreasing the money in circulation and substituting for it non-negotiable securities. Such an operation, to be effective under the circumstances, would have to be so large that it would arouse powerful resistance. It would be attacked as a bankers' plot to spoil prosperity. It would markedly reduce the value of government bonds and be disliked by all who held them. It would probably be begun too late, and would be effective only in toppling a boom structure into another collapse.

The Ready-Made House Arrives

FOR SEVERAL years, it has been known that research experts have been engaged in studying new techniques in the building of houses. Their work has been financed by a group of large industrial corporations directly interested in this field. Now at last the results of this experimentation are apparent. The pre-fabricated, or ready-made, house is here. Several of them are already under construction in the vicinity of New York City. A large number of others will be built during the coming spring and summer. The importance of this development makes it worth reporting in detail, even though it is a private commercial enterprise.

The first company to offer pre-fabricated houses on a large scale is American Houses, Inc., of New York City. It is just about to put on the market a series of houses of this type, containing many radical departures from anything known before in this country. A house will consist of panels of cement and asbestos, formed under tremendous pressure and bolted to a steel frame. Roofs will be flat unless the purchaser wants to pay extra to have a needless gable attached to his house. The style of architecture is thoroughly modern, with simple square lines and liberal use of sun decks, etc.

While the prices of these houses are not yet definitely fixed, a four-room building with all necessary machinery and equipment, but not including furniture, is expected to sell for about $3,800, or $6,800 on the instalment plan, payments being $38 per month for a period of fifteen years. There is no down payment, no first or second mortgage; the purchaser does not begin paying until after he

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has moved in, and at the end of fifteen years, the house is his. The price includes fire insurance, and insurance on the life of the purchaser, so that if he dies during the period of the instalment payments, the house at once becomes the property of his heirs without further expense. There are twelve models of houses, ranging up to nine rooms and three baths, the probable price for the latter being about $10,000 in cash, or $17,800 on the instalment plan, at the rate of $99 a month for fifteen years.

When operations are in full swing, in the near future, the procedure will be as follows: the intending home owner will buy his lot, and make his own arrangements about sewers and connections for water, gas and electricity. He will visit one of the offices of American Homes, Inc., select the type he wishes, and sign his contract. Within a day or two, his house will arrive complete, in one mammoth truck, from one of the regional warehouses established every 500 miles throughout the country. Two expert house-assemblers will arrive with the truck, which incidentally is their home and contains their living quarters; they will employ four or five local laborers in the vicinity, and will assemble the house, a process that is expected to take from two to four weeks. These houses contain no basements; under them will be excavations of only a few feet, with foundations deep enough to get below the frost line. The panels which constitute the walls, and the interior partitions, are bolted to the steel frames. No weight is supported by any interior wall, and, if desired, all interior partitions could safely be removed and the house made into one large room. The construction is so solid that it is estimated it would withstand a hurricane of 120 miles an hour, or snow piled on the roof to a depth of twenty-five feet. At the end of a few weeks' time, the new owner can move in, and will find everything provided to begin housekeeping, even to two days' food on the kitchen shelves. All necessary electrical appliances are in place and ready to operate.

In some of their aspects, these houses are unlike anything known before, certainly at anything like these modest prices. For example, they are all completely air-conditioned, with a guarantee that both temperature and humidity will be controlled within one degree, winter and summer. Because of their construction, they are free from attacks by insects, including termites. The windows are of the casement type, set in the corner of the room to provide greater free wall space, and operated from within by a small crank. Screens for summer and storm windows for winter are attached from the inside, and the windows can be opened with equal readiness whether the screens are in place or not. The floor is made of compressed fireproof hardwood, which ought to be almost indestructible; the flat roof is intended to be used as a terrace. In order to economize on space, electric clocks are built into the walls of several rooms, as are a radio and a cigarette lighter, set in the wall of the living-room.

The heart of this house is the panel called the "moto-unit" into which is built all the operating machinery. One side of this panel is a wall of the kitchen, including air-conditioning equipment, electric refrigerator, hot-water heater, dish or clothes-washing machine, stove, kitchen cupboards, etc.; the other side forms the wall of the bathroom, to which are attached wash-basin, bathtub, shower and toilet. Much of the economy in manufacture is based upon the fact that all this heavy machinery is assembled at one point, and designed and built as one unit.

The objections to housing of this type are several —all fairly obvious. Some people will complain that they do not want a house that looks like every other house down the street. This objection becomes less serious when we remember how few basic types of houses there are now, and how many variations are possible with the twelve styles of pre-fabricated houses at present planned, as well as added possibilities in the way of paint. Many people, again, do not like modern architecture, and will either refuse to buy one of these houses or will disguise it with old-fashioned furbelows at considerable additional expense. A more serious objection is that when people can drop houses all over the landscape on two weeks' notice and, for that matter, can easily take a house apart and move it somewhere else, or can add and subtract rooms at will, all in a few hours, the question of community planning and providing the necessary municipal services becomes much more difficult.

If this type of house becomes as successful as the shrewd gentlemen behind it expect it to, there may be important social consequences. Why should anyone buy an old-fashioned house in the tropics, or indeed almost anywhere in the United States where summer heat is intense, when on two weeks' notice and with no outlay of money except $38 a month, he can get a house that is completely air-conditioned with the same temperature and humidity the year around? Will this not have a depressing effect upon the value of existing land and buildings?

Again, if these houses are turned out by the thousand, what is to become of workers in the building trades, who are no longer necessary? Or of architects and construction engineers? Will not certain industries, such as the manufacture of brick and lumber, experience a sudden sharp reduction of demand? As to labor, it is argued that even in times of prosperity only 25 percent of the men in the building trades were employed on private detached houses of the type now offered, and that of these, at least 90 percent are unemployed just now. Therefore, it is held, the matter of technological unemployment of labor cannot be regarded as a very serious one, at least at present.

Speculation on these points must wait until we find out whether the public reception for ready-made houses is as large as the theorists have supposed. For the same reason, we must reserve judgment on the optimistic notion that here is the new

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industry for which the nation has been waiting and which will bring us out of the depression. For the present, it is sufficient to note that scientific research has here produced a really notable step forward in a field heretofore archaic in its thinking and techniques and that the results can hardly fail to be significant in the next few years.

We can also say with certainty that this is not, alone, the right answer to the housing problem in general, or to the problem of community planning. The price of the cheapest house is not low enough to meet the need of the lower-income classes, particularly when the cost of land, taxes and other extras are figured in. Purchase on the instalment plan over a period of fifteen years is reckless without far greater assurance of steady employment than now exists. And the need for intelligent planning of residential, recreational and other areas will be enormously increased by the impetus to the purchasers of individual houses contemplated by the new venture.

Dr. Persons Among the Facts

ON FEBRUARY 4 of this year, a study of electric rates, made by government officials, was released for publication. One day earlier, by a striking coincidence, another study on the same subject was also made public. This one was done by Dr. Warren M. Persons (not to be confused with Dr. Harlow Person of the Taylor Society).

Dr. Persons, at one time consultant of the Edison Electric Institute, made his study, so he says, on his own initiative. He compared the rates charged for electricity by 290 publicly owned power plants and 290 private ones, much to the disadvantage of the former. He found that the median bill of the municipal plants was $3.59 for 60 kilowatt hours, while the same figure for the private plants was $3.77. If, however, the private plants had paid no taxes in 1934, and had reduced their rates by the amount thus made possible, Dr. Persons says that the median bill for the private plants would have been only $2.45. He adds that he comes to a similar conclusion when he compares the users of slightly more or slightly less electricity per month.

These conclusions look very odd when one compares them with the figures the government made public, contained in a report by the Federal Power Commission. If we look up the median bill for all municipal and private plants in all cities above 50,000 in the United States, we find that Dr. Persons, who confines his observations to larger cities, has picked out private companies whose median average bill is 15 percent below the Federal Power Commission's average, and that the median bill of his municipal plants is 8 percent higher than the median average of all municipal plants covered by the government study. It is further to be noted that of the twenty-four large private companies he selects for comparison, one-quarter are operating under sharply competitive conditions, in most instances with municipal companies. It is a well known fact (and is proved by the F.P.C. report in question) that whenever private companies offer low rates in the United States, it is under pressure of competition, usually from municipally owned plants. It is noteworthy that Dr. Persons omitted all the large plants in the South, where rates charged are notoriously high. Another striking fact about his report is that in estimating the possible low rate of the private companies if they did not have to pay taxes, he has charged the entire tax bill against domestic consumers only. As a matter of fact, domestic consumers on the average use only one-third of the current. This extraordinary error is so important that it makes his calculation almost meaningless.

Dr. Persons has also forgotten, in a way most convenient for the private companies, several other facts about municipal plants. One of these is that they furnish numerous services to the municipality either free or at greatly reduced rates, including electricity for street lighting and water pumping. According to the United States Census, the average charge for such purposes by the municipal plant is 2.1 cents, while the private companies charge on the average 4.7 cents. It is also well known that many municipal plants make substantial cash contributions to the general funds of the municipalities in which they are situated. These contributions often run as high as 40 percent of the gross income of the city and there are sixty or seventy small towns in the United States where the profits of the municipal electric-light plant pay all the operating expenses of the community, and the citizens pay no taxes (or if you prefer, no other taxes) whatever. Dr. Persons has also forgotten that many municipal plants are engaged in amortizing their debts out of current revenues over a fairly short time.

In his report, Dr. Persons remarks that "a shrewd and limited selection of cities is all that is required to marshal plausible support for or against the contention that the domestic rates of municipal electric plants are lower than those of private plants." To this statement we can only agree.

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Facts About Faces: VI. *Gertrude Stein*

Well shaped masculine head chopped from a big block, vigorously modeled, striking as Stonehenge, posed as an image, carrying a close skull-cap of short thick iron-gray hair, a morsel of pelt, Canadian wolf, worn for warmth and service. Canny brown eyes, withdrawn, lazily estimating, with a look of deep secrecy and a wish to rule. Splendid statesman's nose, conscious of huge superiority, with an expression of oncoming power like an approaching locomotive. Heroine's mouth, humorless, satisfied, tasting flattery, sipping it with gratification. Senatorial double-chin, swaddled papoose-style in shrugging shoulders and recalcitrant garments. Earthenware coloring, fence-post figure, little chunky hands and big flat feet. Thick voice like a tom-tom, full of subdued drama and relished resonances. Air of one moving in an atmosphere of thespian pretense, playing trapper in the Far North, or Daniel Boone blazing his trail, with the vitality and conviction of a twelve-year-old. Impressive as a drum-major. Hypnotic as a Yogi. Heap Big Injun.

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In Retrospect[1]

TWO PARALLEL movements in time unroll themselves for memory as I muse at the turn of the year. It is twenty years since I wrote my first article for The New Republic, and became a steadfast reader of its pages. This intimate association has helped in the intervals of several visits to make American life nearly as familiar to me as that of Europe. The two planes of experience remain, however, tantalizingly apart. It is not an ocean that separates us, but rather the tricks of history in timing the social changes that make our illusions and our faiths.

All that is new in our spiritual background is common to us both, with much that is ancient. The same recent cultural influences have played upon us with slight variations of emphasis. We have read the same books. Our eyes, like yours, are happy with Cézanne and blink uneasily at most of his successors. We, too, in these twenty years have seen the horizon of human history flung back by anthropology and archeology into inevitable depths of time. We too grew dizzy over the new physics: we also have become conscious of our endocrine glands, while Freud's teaching has made a revolutionary upheaval in our most intimate life of instinct and emotion. Nothing divides us here, and through these twenty years we have adjusted ourselves with indifferent success to the changes in our material environment, the radio, the airplane, the automatism of machinery, the instability of money and the menace of poison gas.

Thinking, feeling, experimenting in much the same way, with the same artists and teachers to reflect our beliefs and bewilderments, we have none the less followed in our political life a curiously different course. America is just entering the active phase of liberalism that England had almost exhausted twenty years ago. Your Roosevelt, with less genius and more steadiness of purpose, is doing what our Lloyd George did between 1906 and 1914. His tempo is quicker and his plan bolder, for he faces with vaster resources more desperate problems. But the driving force of the New Deal and of that outmoded English liberalism is the same. Both applied to the chaotic industrial system the same fundamentally ethical criticism. Both, with the Hebrew prophets, Protestant theology and the democratic tradition behind them, condemned this chaos as an offense against the moral order. Both believed that an appeal to humanity and reason would suffice to check and chain up the predatory instincts whose effects they deplored. Both aimed primarily at security for the forgotten man, or as English liberals called him, with some dim perception that he is the victim in a class struggle, the under-dog. Both set about it by regulating wages (in the English case through trade boards, wage boards and arbitration tribunals), and building an elaborate mechanism of social insurance and old-age pensions. Both aimed at making housing a public service. The English plan, in some respects more comprehensive, was timider only in its neglect of national work schemes. The two were identical in their belief that by superimposing a regulative apparatus upon capitalist industry, the profit motive in a competitive society could remain the spring of its activities without causing those extremes of misery that had outraged the social conscience and alarmed the sagacity of the progressive middle class.

Under this system we have lived in England for over twenty years. It proved to be the deathbed legacy of the Liberal Party, but every government, since Mr. Asquith fell, has continued the system with variations. Tories acquiesce in it: the few surviving Liberals admire it: Socialists must make the most of it, till they are strong enough to sweep the capitalist system away. It has perceptibly raised the standards of working-class life, and rendered it, if not secure, at least less tragically precarious. It supplies one of the chief reasons why the slump struck our island less heavily than it struck America. So much our earlier version of the New Deal did for us, but assuredly no more. It touched none of the fundamental problems. Our beasts of prey are still carnivorous, and the profit motive produces, as before, all its familiar effects of waste, anarchy and strife. Here, then, is the first contrast. America, with boundless faith, has just adopted the Liberal specifics that ceased among us to arouse our extravagant enthusiasm many a long year ago.

We, on the other hand, have experienced a disillusionment that America escaped. Our idealists built boundless hopes of peace, disarmament and international coöperation on the League of Nations. It was, like the Liberal social reforms, a product of the ethical attitude. As at home, so on the world stage, the Liberal shrank from fundamental change. The old economic motives should work as before. The Powers should still face each other, sovereign, exclusive, competitive. The same struggle for markets, raw materials, fields of investment and outlets for surplus population should still go on. But all should promise to observe some standard of ethical behavior, law should bind us across our frontiers that bristle with guns: in the last resort, the many good citizens of this shadowy cosmopolis should coerce the evil few. The failure of ethical liberal-

[1] This article is the fourth of a special group by various writers, prepared at the invitation of The New Republic in commemoration of its twentieth anniversary.—THE EDITORS.

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ism is in this case even more evident than in the other. Here it would be hard to point even to a modest improvement, unless one chooses to say that the League has standardized thyroid extract, done much for the prevention of malaria and collected some reliable statistics. Only the blinder and more elderly of our idealists retain their illusions.

It has been, you will grant me, an eventful and educative experience through which we English have passed in these twenty years. The War inevitably left a deeper scar in our memories: we had no epoch of prosperity during which politics stood becalmed: we blockaded Russia, coerced Ireland and India and watched at our doors the rise of fascism, while we were shedding our liberal illusions. With what faiths or conclusions have "we" emerged? I mean by this word "we," the progressive group that corresponds as nearly as may be with the writers and readers of The New Republic—the group, let us say, that wrote and read the London Nation in its palmy days, for a few years The New Leader, and after their decline The New Statesman. The English group throughout this period was less detached, and nearer to the springs of political movement than the American. When I recall the friends and colleagues who worked with me as regular contributors to these weekly papers, I can count among them some Members of Parliament, several Cabinet Ministers and one Prime Minister. We too were high-brows: our opponents often called us un-English: we usually, even when our party was in office, played the part of the candid friend, but we were rarely so far in front of the general movement of thought as Americans of the same type and temperament have been through most of this period.

Twenty-one years ago English Liberalism was at the height of its prestige and achievement. It had finished in its duel with the Lords the long struggle between the industrial middle class and the landed aristocracy. It attracted, save for the little Fabian group, most of the intellectuals—and even the Fabians still fed it, when no one was looking, with ideas. Of these it was omnivorous, for it could swallow the most contradictory ideas without indigestion. Socialists jostled the last heirs of Cobden, as they marched together to liberate Ireland, and pacifists of a noble rectitude accepted the "whips" of the Ministers who even then were preparing behind the scenes the great Liberal war. It is true that a little Labor Party skirmished on its flanks. It was, however, at this stage, hardly more than a parasite. It lived largely by the tolerance of the Liberals. Grinding its teeth and vowing its independence, it could do nothing but support their policies and tamely say ditto to social insurance, land taxes, old-age pensions and Home Rule. It growled when Persia was partitioned, when money was loaned to the Tsar, when Egypt was savagely coerced, when the fleet was made ready for "the day." But so did we, and we did it, I think, rather more effectively. I had been myself a member of the I.L.P. since 1907, but until the War my membership was nominal. It did not then welcome recruits of my type, and in the vital, tolerant Liberal press of those days, we could express ourselves with reasonable freedom.

With the outbreak of the War, we ceased to exist as a group. Some enlisted: two went to prison: one waged the War from Downing Street, and I, after the suppression in the Courts of some of my writings, found with difficulty a publisher for a book on the idea of the League. Slowly, as the War went on, we came together again, with some losses and some new recruits. But now everything was changed. Our aim was a peace by consent: our arch-enemy was Lloyd George: our allies were the unbending left of the Labor Party, which had furnished the only organized opposition to the War. In 1914 among us I had been the only member of this party, and my membership was nominal: by 1918 nearly all of us had joined it, and The Nation editorially backed it in the general election. The Liberal Party, amid the stench of personal feuds and financial laxity, with the Black and Tans and the Versailles peace for its final record, was rapidly dissolving. The Labor Party grew as it declined, and took its leaders from the men who had opposed the War. Not only were we in it, but in its new incarnation it found work for us. We wrote for it; and some of us sat on its ministerial front bench.

It was not at this stage—nor indeed, until after the catastrophe of 1931—effectively a Socialist Party, though it used socialist phrases in its perorations. Its immediate program, the things in which it really believed, were a rounding off, an exaggeration—perhaps, as I see it in retrospect, a *reductio ad absurdum*—of the liberal agenda. I call it that because it left the owning class in power, masters of the machines, controllers of the press, arbiters of every employee's fortunes, and yet expected that this sovereign class would submit to a crushing war of taxation. But about this problem of power, the English Labor movement would not think, and has only just begun to think. It was still, until the other day, incorrigibly liberal and wedded to its ethical outlook. It did, indeed, cast admiring glances at Russia. On one occasion a conference met which decided to set up Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Nothing happened, but I recollect with amusement that Mr. MacDonald and Lady Snowden attended this conference, while I, more sober than these ardent revolutionaries, stayed at home. This was, however, an insincere and momentary effervescence, and for the most part the movement jogged along its liberal highway without much misgiving. The General Strike of 1926 was an accidental aberration. The leaders were bluffing, and were staggered when the Tories called their bluff. It had never crossed their minds that a general strike is a revolutionary act. From 1925 onwards we (though the group kept changing through deaths and the accession of new recruits) were growing increasingly restless, and discontented with the Liberal course and the pilots who set it.

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The betrayal of 1931 (which was no sudden treachery) hardened the movement for a time, cured it on the surface at least of some of its Liberal illusions, and turned its face towards the conquest of economic power. We felt happier in this hour of abysmal defeat than we had felt in either of the two periods of office and success. Today, with fortune beckoning once more on the near horizon, we are less confident. The party has swallowed most of our formulas and proposals, but does it effectively believe in them? This pilgrimage and above all the last twenty years of it, has made us, not indeed less obstinate in our convictions, but assuredly less sanguine in our hopes. When I question the younger men and women who will succeed us, I find them altogether more realistic than we were. Their world began with the War. They have no rationalist illusions. They do not blush and stammer when events force them to think in terms of power, military or economic. The ethical approach is not with them instinctive, as it was with us. They care much less than we did and do for liberty, and to me at least they seem relatively indifferent to some of the subtler things, the chivalries and humanities, that meant much to us. They are not liberals and I am not sure, when they harden into middle age, whether, on the whole, they will look more like fascists or like communists.

What at the end of these two decades remain to us as sifted convictions? Negatively, at least in our conscious thinking, we have shed the ethical habit of thought and the cheerful eighteenth-century rationalism with which we started. We are not at all sure that men will in the long run act reasonably, or follow any sane calculation of collective interest. From Freud and from experience we have learned uncomfortably much about the technique that manufactures opinion and we know that money can usually command it. Surveying history, we believe with Marx that economic motive is decisive and that economic changes condition political movement. But we respectfully question the forecast that Marx based on these premises. We do not see the triumph of socialism and the proletariat as inevitable. We aspire more ardently than ever after order, a consciously planned society and peace, and we believe, more firmly than ever, that the private ownership and control of fields, factories and banks is the fountain of disorder, and the spring of strife. No less passionately we believe in liberty, above all in freedom to think and debate. We do not call it a right that inheres in the individual. We see it rather as the character and *sine qua non* of a rational society. It collectively must be free as much to doubt as to affirm. It may turn out that these two positions are incompatible. It may be that our hatred of cruelty, mental or physical, is, like our love of liberty, a relic of a dying culture. We feel no certainty when we peer into the future. But this prediction all of us would risk. If we live for another twenty years in the laboratory that is our Earth, we shall not witness from any New Deal fruits markedly different from those that grew on the gnarled stock of English Liberalism.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

London.

State and Church in Mexico

SENATOR William Borah's resolution attacking the Mexican government for religious intolerance and proposing an official investigation, and Representative John Higgins' demand for the breaking off of diplomatic relations, recently made headline news. Has anyone heard of Mexican Senator Juan Pérez' demand for an investigation of the United States?

Such an investigation, even were it to be proposed, would scarcely offset the harm already done by Borah's resolution. It is an engraved invitation to every sagebrush pot-shotter to create disorder in Mexico. Borah has played into the hands of a plot against the Mexican regime. A new Bartholomew's Day is being prepared. Very large sums have been raised by American sympathizers of the Catholic Church, by wealthy concession-hunters and others, to start an armed movement against the Cárdenas government. It is reported that arms and ammunition, airplanes, machine guns and poison gas have been purchased. Elaborate offices are maintained in New York City.

Influences have also been at work on our government to lift the embargo on arms into Mexico. But even if this aid should result in victory for a Catholic reaction—as easily might happen—it could hardly hope to rule, and then only temporarily, except by the most atrocious terrorism, the annihilation of all labor and peasant forces and the undoing of the popular gains that have already cost two decades of revolutionary disturbances.

The argument has been adduced, with justification, that the Obregón-Calles regime owes its existence in part to arms and other assistance supplied in the past by the United States government. But American responsibility is also involved in the creation of the governments of Cuba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Honduras and Guatemala—among the worst on this continent. Ultimately the peoples of those countries will have to kill off all the hybrid fowls we helped to hatch, but this is scarcely an argument for further intervention. Any new government in those parts would at once be tarred with the same brush. And but

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little good can come from officially promoting the interests of factional religious strife, however much one faction may be abused at the moment.

I hold no brief for the present regime in Mexico. But in all fairness it should be clearly stated that it is the product of many years of revolution, which have freed nearly ten million serfs and have resulted in a far more enlightened labor code than that of Idaho or Mr. Higgins' Massachusetts. Much land has been restored to the villages. For the first time in Mexico's history, fairly well generalized programs of education and public health—the budgets for which have been greatly increased by the present Cárdenas administration—have been instituted. For fifteen years the Mexican government has lived within its budget and from current revenues has promoted noteworthy public works, roads, railroads, irrigation, etc. Mexico has a sound managed currency and the government has fostered some rural credit and has broken the monopoly of the foreign banks. Today Mexico is one of the few relatively prosperous countries in the world that have practically no unemployment.

The program of the revolution was carried forward actively until the arrival of Ambassador Morrow in 1927, whereupon compromise was effected on all fronts. Peace was temporarily made with the Church. From 1927 to 1934 the government moved steadily right. From 1928 on, all independent labor, peasant and professional groups have been largely suppressed and the National Revolutionary Party (P.N.R.), in the control of wealthy politicians and generals, has had entire monopoly—in semi-fascist fashion—over all political and many economic activities. The leaders of this group have become increasingly wealthy. Many flaunted their ill gained opulence in the most vulgar ways.

By 1934 the rumblings of new peasant revolt were beginning to be heard. The hidden rifles were being pulled from the thatched roofs. Once again armed bands were harassing the large landowners. So, toward the end of his presidential term, President General Abelardo Rodríguez (perhaps the richest man in Mexico, the basis for his fortune having been laid in the frontier gambling dens) suddenly revived land distribution and, though he had been very abusive to labor, signed a pale minimum-wage law. Calles had already enunciated his six-year plan, which provides for a regulated native capitalism and public-works scheme, the ultimate goal to be collectivization, though very little of the latter is provided by the plan. Unrest made it necessary to deliver the P.N.R. over to its more left-wing elements—hence the election of General Lázaro Cárdenas, reputedly honest and poor, to the presidency on an anti-foreign, nationalistic, anti-Church, agrarian and pro-labor program.

The schism between the two wings of the P.N.R. is deeper than the quiet transition largely effected through the iron rule of Calles might suggest. One of Cárdenas' first acts was to confiscate without compensation the palatial gambling-hall cabaret belonging to the bigwigs of the outgoing administration. The personal fortunes of the so-called revolutionary group are now threatened with investigation.

While Calles imposed on the new President his own Cabinet—including several relatives—Cárdenas has concentrated his position by wholesale discharge of departmental subordinates and generous use of patronage. Right-wing control has been broken. Also Calles' dangerous illness has hastened the political process that may soon end his active hegemony. A five-cornered play of forces is at work within the regime: the strictly personal Calles group, the Cárdenas left wing, the Rodríguez-Riva Palacio right wing of wealthy business men and politicians, part of the peasant and labor forces, and the army, at present largely dominated by Calles and Cárdenas. In passive opposition, occasionally supporting, occasionally opposing, are the majority of the peasant and labor groups. In active opposition, except on the Church issue, are the Communists, also the Catholics, and the political outs, largely discredited but busy, led by Villareal and Vasconcelos, on one fringe in contact with the Catholics and, on the other, with some of the dissatisfied Rodríguez-Riva Palacio group. They have plans well under way for the hatching of a revolutionary drive in this country, plans now gratuitously aided by Borah.

Unlike fascist regimes in Europe, the Mexican government is supported not by elements seeking to preserve the status quo by force and state-regulated economy, but by classes on the make, expanding their living standards—the native bourgeoisie, the middle class and sectors of the peasants and proletariat. In a non-industrialized country emerging from colonial status, it is possible for the government, at least temporarily and with some inconsistences and difficulties, to improve the material welfare of all the classes simultaneously.

The enemies of all these groups are the old feudal *hacienda* class—with which for centuries the Catholic hierarchy has been traditionally allied—and foreign capital and imperialism. The additional problem of foreign mass-production competition with new native manufacturing has been handled by tariffs, special subsidies on state-owned railroads, foreign-exchange control and other protective devices.

The Morrow compromise effected a temporary truce with feudal and foreign capitalist elements, chiefly at the expense of the proletariat and peasants. But inevitably the old conflicts were bound to reassert themselves, for the native bourgeoisie, even if it had complete control of the state, is not strong enough to stand by itself. It is now less dangerous for the bourgeoisie to unite with popular elements at home than to ally itself with foreign capital or to surrender to the stagnating tendencies of an outworn feudalism. Once more it has been obliged to widen its support and attempt a recon-

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quest of a large sector of the workers and peasants.

This has inevitably revived the centuries-old religious conflict. By 1934 it had become an imperative political necessity for the regime again to assault the Church in order to forge a new unity of its own partisans and bridge the inner contradictions of its own hybrid class composition. The one deep conviction common to all the progressive and revolutionary elements in Mexico is the necessity of preventing at all costs any return to power of clerical forces. The official leaders have realized the rallying power of the anti-Church slogans. I have seen in secret P.N.R. correspondence, dated last August, that a definite anti-Church drive was planned to forestall proletarian revolution, unify the party and regain the support of alienated factions. Thus, doctrines of extreme nationalism and of anti-clericalism, whatever their validity, have been utilized as a smokescreen to hide from the militant portions of the Mexican people the failure to carry to successful completion the revolutionary promises. Obviously this is a dangerous game.

But quite apart from the political expediency involved, the conflict has broader implications and cannot be understood outside of its historical setting. The struggle began back in colonial days. The first real challenge to the Church came with the 1833 Gómez Farias laws. These were at once swept aside; not until 1857, after many years of civil war, was separation of Church and State and restriction of most special Church privileges brought about. The Church demands in those days were exactly the opposite of what they are now. Then it opposed religious tolerance, freedom of education, freedom of the press and freedom of suffrage as strongly as it now demands such things. The Church regained some ground by helping the French intervention seat Emperor Maximilian, ground mostly lost even before his downfall. It again recaptured some *de facto* prerogatives under Díaz, but never since 1857 has it recovered its legal rights to them. The 1917 Constitution, with even sharper restrictions, followed the lines of the 1857 document.

Church opposition to the revolution's land and labor program resulted, among other things, in a peremptory enforcing of the more extreme anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution, which caused the 1925 controversy leading to the memorable strike of the clergy and armed uprising in five states; the assassination of President-elect Obregón by a religious fanatic; the burning of men, women and children in the terrible priest-attended train attack on the Guadalajara line; the execution of Father Pro and two others without trial; the summary imprisonment and execution of many Catholics. The deadlock was temporarily shelved by the Morrow pact.

Since then, the Morrow pact has been broken by the state government's passing still more restrictive laws on the number of priests; by the Church, through its consistent distribution of anti-government literature at all church services and through the clergy's clandestine maneuvers to regain control of the public-school system. Friction multiplied. Step by step the conflict has moved on to more violent phases. Mobs, more or less officially inspired, have destroyed Catholic saints and shrines; the government arrested a priest charged with inciting a village to murder two women theosophists; it has indicted several exiled bishops for incendiary pastorals; it has imposed a new rationalistic school law, mistakenly termed socialist; it has closed institutions of higher learning because of the clerically instigated mass protests of students; it has denied the mails to religious propaganda. Many small pro-Catholic bands, some led by priests or church sacristans, have been suppressed.

As the government has the whip-hand, the Church has been reduced to greater impotence at each turn of the wheel. This time, even the Catholic boycott has been largely ineffectual. The Church has only a bootleg existence in about six states. Each move of the Church merely brings more drastic reprisals. Nevertheless, it has proclaimed that it will never give up the fight to reëstablish Catholic instruction in the public schools; it has issued pastorals inciting to armed revolt; it has declared that no Catholic could support the new rationalistic education law or be a socialist; it has excommunicated all government employees, teachers and P.N.R. members.

The spectacular new personality in the revived struggle is the Minister of Agriculture, Tomás Garrido Canabal. He is of French, Spanish, Indian and American descent, a Huey Long type, who entered the Cabinet with a special fascist-revolutionary guard clad in jaunty red shirts and caps and black trousers—a perfect symbol of the ideological confusion of the present government. Garrido drove the priests out of the state of Tabasco (of which he was governor and of which the present Indian Archbishop Pascual Díaz is a native) over ten years ago by a law requiring all priests to marry. He is now the pivot of the anti-Church drive, and holds a weekly saint-burning ceremony in the patio of the Secretariat. Garrido's red-black shirts have been actively terrorizing Catholic congregations.

Dangerous as is the official game, the government holds nearly all the cards. That it is playing them all wisely and honestly is to be doubted. That the clerical party in power, or the present political outs, would deal them any more wisely or honestly is even more to be doubted. The clericals are now paying a bitter price for their past mistakes and abuses. Unfortunately for the Church, there is no Maximilian in sight to be put on the throne by debt-collecting battleships. But even Maximilian, who was a liberal Catholic, was unable to satisfy the Mexican episcopate; they helped to crucify him. Despite their scanty knowledge of Mexican history, we propose Representative Higgins or Senator Borah for the job.

CARLETON BEALS.

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Washington Revisited

WHEN I was in Washington, a few days ago, the city was experiencing one of those unseasonable spells of warmth that come so often in late February and make the unwary believe that spring is here. The parks suddenly burgeoned with government clerks at lunch time; under a friendly blue sky, automobilists opened their windows and their tires began to sing along the dry pavement. But a few hours later, a small blizzard came down on the wings of a biting northwest wind. The parks were white, the streets were black and wet again and the hotel doorman thumped his numb fingers against his sides. Spring was suddenly as far away as in December. Perhaps it was only a shivery imagination that made me compare the weather with the false dawn of hope in the minds of so many people regarding Mr. Roosevelt's ultimate intention, a hope that has been rudely frostbitten of late. But in any case the liberals in Washington are now a sad lot, shivering in the wintry wind. However unjust their feeling may be, they do believe that the President has let them down badly. I do not think that anything he might now do could restore their confidence in him; and, I must add in honesty, I can discover no important signs that he wishes such a restoration.

Huey in 1936?—The chief subject of conversation in Washington at present is Huey Long. The degree to which attention is concentrated upon him is amazing when one recalls that only a year or so ago he was widely assumed to be through. The general verdict of those who have been in contact with him is that he is highly intelligent, knows exactly what he wants to do and is proceeding toward his chosen goal with the implacable efficiency that we associate with the Japanese. Political observers have suddenly begun speculating as to whether he might not cause Mr. Roosevelt to lose the election of 1936—not by winning it himself but by splitting the Democratic vote and enabling a Republican to squeeze through.

The argument, which has already appeared in print in various places, is that Huey will undoubtedly run, that he will carry Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and perhaps some other Southern states; that the Progressives of the Northwest are now so alienated from Roosevelt that they will not support him, but will either go to Huey or put their own ticket in the field; that no matter how hard he tries, Roosevelt cannot really win the favor of the conservatives, and that a reasonably strong Republican candidate who promised sound money and an end of experimentation would carry the populous Northeastern states and, with them, the election. Against this ingenious argument must be put Roosevelt's personal popularity, which continues to be enormous in spite of everything; the fact that in 1936 there will probably still be millions of persons either unemployed or on work relief, and that these individuals and all their friends will certainly support Roosevelt against any Republican candidate if there is the remotest chance that the latter may return to the old policy of "local starvation" instead of federal aid; and, finally, the tremendous and highly efficient political machine that Jim Farley has built up throughout the United States —a machine based on the support of job-holders for whom it is almost literally a life and death matter that the Democrats continue in power.

The bitterness of the feeling against Farley is remarkable; he is the worst-hated man I can remember in Washington for many years. It is everywhere accepted as true that he has Tammanyized the country. Over and over again I heard the wish fervently expressed that the Huey Long investigation of Farley's affairs in New York City might produce material so damaging that he would be forced out of public life.

The White House as Ivory Tower.—Many people in Washington who have in the past been warm supporters of Roosevelt are now gravely concerned because, they feel, he is out of touch with the mood of the country and is suffering from the handicap that afflicts all Presidents—the inability to hear frank and candid criticism from anyone. As to this, the change in the past few weeks has been amazing. Roosevelt has heretofore been famous for his quick intuitions, his strong sense of what the people wanted and his immediate response to their varying moods. Today, so Washington believes, this is greatly changed.

One important reason for this is the inferior quality of the men with whom Mr. Roosevelt has surrounded himself in the White House, and the power they possess. One could, indeed, make something of an argument to the effect that Mr. Marvin McIntyre is now the most important man in the United States. I know of several instances of people trying to get to the President—people whom he should have seen for his own sake and for the sake of the country. In each case they were shunted off by the too efficient Mr. McIntyre. It is also regrettable—from one point of view at least—that the President now leans so heavily on the old-fashioned Democrats who are the nominal leaders of the party in the House and Senate. These are, no doubt, worthy gentlemen, but they are old and tired, their intellectual quality is not very high and, broadly speaking, they do not know what it is all about.

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It is amazing to compare Mr. Roosevelt's position with that of the ruler in any important European country. In England, for example, while the governmental machine has plenty of faults, it is efficient in one respect. The Prime Minister has the assistance of a group of extraordinarily brilliant men. They do for him much the same sort of thing that the Brain Trust did for Mr. Roosevelt while he was still a candidate; they study questions of broad social policy in an independent, non-partisan spirit, and embody their findings in brief memoranda for the eyes of the chief alone. If a man turns up up anywhere who seems to have an important new idea, they visit him, pick his brains and report the result, also in strict confidence. When an important document comes along, one of them goes through it, skeletonizes its hundreds or thousands of pages and reduces its important contents to a few hundred words. Mr. Roosevelt is without any assistance of this sort. Of the three gentlemen he has with him in the White House, one is largely incapacitated by illness, and none of the three is qualified by training, experience or ability to act in this way. In so far as they are not playing politics, they are a combination of glorified bouncer and receptionist.

It is a great pity that after his election, Mr. Roosevelt should have felt he needed to reward the members of his Brain Trust with public offices. Jobs were found for which none of them was ideally fitted, jobs that could have been done by many other people who were available. If the President had kept these men in the White House with him, without title of any sort, and had used them in the confidential and anonymous work of advising him, the story of the past few months might have been far different.

Why Should We Fight Japan?—To an occasional visitor like myself, it is astonishing to see how much attention Washington is now turning to military and naval matters and, in particular, to the possibility of conflict with Japan. On no other theory is anyone able to explain the enormous sums that are now being asked from Congress to increase the strength of our army and navy. If they are appropriated, as they almost certainly will be, they will amount to about one billion dollars for the coming year and presumably to an even larger amount each year thereafter. In so far as there is a New Deal, it has not yet had any effect upon our relations with the Orient. The President, the Secretary of State and everyone else in authority seem to take it for granted that we have a tremendous stake in the Far East, that this stake is seriously threatened by Japan and that it can be safeguarded by a course of conduct which, when followed by other nations in the past, has invariably led to war. If anyone tries to suggest that the Open Door in China and the other parts of Asia was never opened more than an inch, and is now closed and locked, that whether we like it or not Japan will certainly dictate the economic future of this area, and that three months of a war would cost far more than our trade and investments in the Far East would be worth in a generation, he is met with blank stares. The matter is simply not worth discussing. America has an imperial destiny in the Far East, and that destiny must and will be carried out. It makes you feel that you must be dreaming, that this is some dreadful nightmare from which you will presently awaken to find the country engaged in minding its own business within its own borders; that this cannot seriously be the attitude of the American government in the year 1935. But it is. Asked for any other explanation of our policy, the Washingtonian looks at you with some pity and a little kindness, and replies, "The President is an amateur yachtsman, and he loves ships."

Faith Without Public Works.—Public works have had $3,300,000,000; they are about to get $4,880,000,000 more. These are tidy sums; even the first one is a lot of money, and it is astonishing, even when we take into account the many good reasons, that we have so little to show for it. With project after project, we are still in the stage of what is going to happen, and not what has been done. Take, for example, the matter of municipally owned and operated electric-light plants, built with federal loans. If I am correctly informed, only one of these at a recent date was generating current, though others are building, or planned for, or the application has been sent in, or the cities are thinking it over.

I believe I know a possible reason for at least part of this laggardness. The P.W.A. employs, to pass on some of these projects, both army engineers and other technicians who have been brought up in the school of the private utility companies. Neither group has the slightest enthusiasm for public ownership of anything, and least of all, electric-light plants. The army men, moreover, are under a special difficulty of their own. The military forces are constantly seeking large appropriations from Congress and, as everybody knows, the private utilities have tremendous influence upon that body. It is no criticism of their sincerity to ask: Would it not be flying in the face of universal human nature to expect these engineers to exert themselves night and day to do something that a large number of Congressmen regard as an outrageous misuse of government money? I do not know that this is true; but I should be astonished to find that it is not.

At any rate, it is no secret that the results of the public-works activities up to now are disappointingly small. Even more disappointing is the available information as to what the President proposes to do with the new $4,880,000,000 that he hopes to get from Congress. Nobody outside the government service knows what will be done, or by what miracle we are suddenly to leap from the speed of a snail to that of a stream-lined train, or

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how in the world we are to employ 2,500,000 heads of families on these projects, or how we are to turn unemployed musicians, bookkeepers, college professors, journalists and miniature painters into cement mixers, bricklayers and hoisting-engine operators.

The Bad, Bad, Big.—One finds in Washington an interesting recrudescence of the old idea that mere bigness is bad, in and of itself, and must be stopped, though the opponents of the notion, so far as I can judge, are still in a large majority and include many persons whose opinion must be taken seriously. The thought is one of which, as is well known, Mr. Justice Brandeis of the United States Supreme Court is the spiritual father. The growing sentiment of this character is reflected in the large number of states that now levy special taxes on chain grocery stores and gasoline stations, taxes in some cases so onerous that the chain units are being forced out of business. It was reflected, also, in a bill introduced in the Senate the other day by Senator Wheeler of Montana, providing for a tax on the profits of corporations progressively graduated in accordance with their size. Opponents of one consolidated national unemployment-insurance plan oppose it on this ground. Most of them admit that such a plan is theoretically preferable to having forty-eight different systems—or fewer if some states stay out—but they say that a scheme of this sort to cover the whole United States is too big to be managed, that the trained and competent men cannot be found to direct such an enormous undertaking.

This argument raises some interesting questions. If England can operate such a plan successfully, with 45,000,000 people, or Germany with 65,000,000, at what exact point between 65,000,000 and 130,000,000 does the project become too large to be manageable? And incidentally, what about Russia, where national unemployment insurance and a great many other things are operated successfully for a population, not of 130,000,000 but of 165,000,000? And how big, anyhow, is a country where the entire population can listen to a speech at the same moment, where Los Angeles is only overnight from New York, and where all important statistical tabulations are made by automatic machinery? This question of the immorality of size would seem to be one that called for dispassionate, scientific inquiry. Just what large corporations are bad, and how much worse are they than small ones? A good many business units have increased in size twice or five or ten times during the thirty years that the crusade against bigness has been in progress; have they become twice or five or ten times as wicked?

I do not know the answer; my own observation would tend to suggest that some big corporations are bad, in this special sense, and that others are good; but that even the good ones have in the past often followed anti-social policies, and that indeed these anti-social policies are sometimes implicit in the nature of private capitalistic enterprise itself, even when carried on by men who are fanatically anxious to obey the law. I suspect, however, that a careful scientific inquiry of this sort is the last thing we are likely to get.

"Don't Let the War End Too Soon."—On the great controversy as to whether persons employed on work relief should receive the going rate of wages or the starvation pay of $50 a month, most of the experts with whom I talked in Washington were in favor of paying full wages. I found, however, a surprising dissent from this point of view among certain individuals who would normally be sympathetic with it. These are persons connected with the government organizations that hope to have the spending of some of the vast new appropriation, and they want low wages for fear the money will not hold out long enough to enable them to finish the housing plans or superhighways or flood-control projects on which they are engaged.

They are in the position, in fact, of supporting a policy that would keep the depression going some time longer in order that by thus, so to speak, continuing to burn down the house, they can roast their own particular pigs. They reminded me of the people one met in Washington during the closing days of the War, people engaged in all sorts of enterprises, such as engraving the retail price of a pair of shoes on the soles to prevent profiteering, and who used to say, in complete unconsciousness of how their point of view might strike others: "I do hope the War won't end too soon and spoil all our plans."

BRUCE BLIVEN.

Washington.

Workers of Vienna

February 12, 1934.

Not your names, do we know, Comrades Anonymous,
Nor your faces.
Nor on what last longing your eyes closed,
On what last anguish.
—the wife widowed, the child orphaned—

The final dignity of grief at your graves
We could not offer—
Comrades Anonymous.
Workers' blood drenching the frozen soil
Is nameless blood.

But the earth turns.
The frozen soil melts at your hot rich blood.
Seeing in spring the blood-bronzed fertile fields,
We shall know our time for sowing.
You tilled, we sow, they shall harvest—
Comrades Anonymous.

HILDE ABEL.

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Washington Notes

The Work-Relief Battle: Round Two—Deluge into Drizzle—Politics and the C.C.C. —Practical Mr. Roosevelt

IT IS possible that within the next few days Mr. Roosevelt may surmount the difficulties he has encountered in the Senate over his work-relief bill, or if the difficulties prove too great, he may think of another way to put through the bill in the form he wants it. Certainly, when one considers the administration's complete control in the House and remembers the narrow margin by which the McCarran prevailing-wage amendment was carried, it is almost inconceivable that he should give up because he was defeated on one proposition by a single vote. It is only logical to suppose that the bill will again come out, be passed with or without the McCarran amendment and finally, in the Conference Committee, be shaped into the form Mr. Roosevelt desires.

For more than a hundred years controversies of this sort between President and Congress have been settled in conference committees. In this case, with both Speaker Byrns and Vice President Garner strongly pro-Roosevelt, there is every reason to believe that at least a majority of the conferees named by them will be amenable to what the President insists on having. The Conference Committee is the last resort and, once that breastwork is occupied, it is hard to see how the President can lose. If Mr. Roosevelt does not eventually have his way with Congress, it will indicate that his leadership and control have vanished.

Regardless of the outcome of this work-relief struggle, however, what has happened is not without significance. I pointed out some time ago that the President had lost ground in the Senate, largely because the progressives had lost their original enthusiasm about his liberalism. The vote on the McCarran amendment was convincing proof of this. But even more interesting was the demonstration following the vote. It indicated that there was no longer in the country any overwhelming, spontaneous and militant Roosevelt sentiment that could be counted upon to assert itself the moment opposition to him or his policies appeared. The day after the vote, Democratic Senate leader Joseph T. Robinson "took the case to the country" over the air, appealing to the voters to rally to the support of the President. The journalistic spokesmen of the administration followed suit. In particular, the Hearst outfit of some twenty papers burst into editorial flames, denouncing the supporters of the McCarran amendment as dangerous demagogues; urging everybody to write or wire his Senator. The expected flood of letters and telegrams, did not, however, materialize. A certain amount of propaganda about the deluge of White House mail was given out, but it immediately ceased when a check-up showed the deluge to be hardly more than a drizzle.

So far as the Senators who voted against the President are concerned, not one of them had enough denunciatory letters to worry about. Some persons who are close to the President believe that this unresponsiveness came, not from any diminution in his personal popularity but from the failure to understand that he is in a jam. These advisers are urging him to make another Sunday-night fireside talk on the whole general work-relief subject, in particular explaining his reasons for opposing the prevailing-wage amendment. They assure him that this will send the recalcitrant Senators scurrying for cover.

Perhaps they are right, and perhaps that is what the President will do instead of waiting to put on the pressure in the Conference Committee. But I doubt it. In fact, I doubt two things—first, that he will make the appeal, and second, that if he does make it, the effect will be as predicted by his advisers. One reason I think he will not make the appeal is because it would put him in the position of definitely attacking the Senate. It would be a confession of the failure of his control and leadership in a body where his party has almost a two-thirds majority. Further, it would create more resentment in the Senate than now exists. And if he makes the appeal and then fails, he will be through as a leader.

The plain fact about the President's work-relief proposal is that there is too much opposition to it from too many different quarters for anything like an overwhelming public sentiment to be whipped up in its favor. Liberals oppose it for one reason; conservatives for another. It has the enmity of the industrialists and budget balancers because it goes too far; it is opposed by the progressives because it does not go far enough. Labor is utterly opposed unless the prevailing wage is in, capital completely hostile unless it is out. Under the circumstances, it is clear that this is a bill that has to be put through by presidential force rather than by public sentiment—and that is the way it probably will go through in the end. Actually, Roosevelt relies mainly on the House. In that body, the new Speaker gives out statements of the Representatives' determination to stand by the President, insisting that the House will reject the Senate amendment and restore the bill to its original form in Conference Committee. Probably he is right.

At any rate, the willingness of the House to stand by the President on this and every other issue has been by no means diminished by the announcement that 10,000 new jobs are to be created in connection with the expansion of the C.C.C., and that these are to be distributed through the Democratic members of the House—not the Senate. This announcement did not come from the President, but from Speaker Byrns after a committee of disgruntled Democratic members had visited the White House to complain about lack of patronage. Later, Mr. Byrns modified his statement, denying that he had said these jobs would go to Democratic members, but the effect remained the same. It is a proposition, of course, that greatly grieves the advocates of civil service and by no means harmonizes with the non-partisan pretensions of the administration. Furthermore, it gives a distinctly political flavor to the New Deal agency that up to now has been wholly free from politics and almost entirely immune to criticism. However, the pressure from dissatisfied members was very great. There were symptoms of a revolt in the House, and the concession was made for reasons of practical politics. It isn't a very pretty thing for Mr. Roosevelt to do, but politics is politics and the President is a practical man.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Other People's Money

Inflation Ahead—What to Do About It —God in the Bible Belt—Good News for Wall Street

THE QUESTION that disturbs the minds of most people who have a few dimes left is the prospect of inflation. I have been about the country rather extensively this last year and everywhere I have been asked: "What can a man do to guard against inflation?"

Mr. W. M. Kiplinger, whose Washington letter is pulled out on me whenever I visit a business man's office, has, in collaboration with Mr. Frederick Shelton, written a book —a series of letters to the present inheritors of the abundant life, entitled "Inflation Ahead—What to Do About It." Anyone who opens this book expecting to be told what to do about "inflation ahead" is doomed to disappointment. The book should be called "Recovery Ahead—What to Do About It."

The sum total of the authors' thesis is that government financing plus normal banking practices is piling up unused credit resources in the banks and that this credit inflation will begin to produce recovery by the middle of 1936, break into prosperity by 1937 and reach its full flower by 1939, with the next depression coming in 1941, just about the time Mr. Roosevelt steps out of the White House at the end of his second term.

But in discussing these forecasts, the authors shift back and forth, almost without being aware of it, from the symptoms, conditions and maladies of business recovery and expansion to the symptoms, maladjustments and preludes to currency inflation. "Recovery inflation," as Messrs. Kiplinger and Shelton describe the impending phenomenon, is likely to turn out to be something very different in its consequences from the inflation that is now troubling the investor's mind. One may very well be attended with what is called business expansion, while the other may be nothing more than a feverish rise in prices without any business expansion whatever.

What to do about it, therefore, will be one problem in the case of recovery expansion and quite another in the case of a monetary inflation. So if you are looking for the return of another encore from our capitalist system, with a touch of prosperity in 1936 and spectacular prosperity in 1937, you will find in Messrs. Kiplinger and Shelton's book a collection of very vague and not very useful recommendations which will help you to this extent: if you are 100 percent in doubt before you read the book you will be only 99 percent in doubt after you read it.

And now I would like to give you my own advice on what to do in case we have inflation. You can make a great deal of money out of it. All you have to do is to speculate. This brings up another question. Do you know how to speculate? And the answer to that one is no. Which leaves you pretty much back in the hole you came out of.

Since Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in March, 1933, and began saving us with the New Deal, some 4,000,000 unemployed have been put back to work. The average wage increase over the 1932 level has been $1.40 each. To state the matter somewhat differently, about 30,000,000 workers have enjoyed a wage increase averaging $1.40 a week. That means $42,000,000 a week gain, or $2,184,000,000 for the year. The 4,000,000 put back to work, supposedly enjoying the same wage, would be getting $75,200,000 a week, or $3,910,000,000 a year. Together this makes the very impressive total of $5,144,000,000 a year. For the two years it means $10,288,000,000. This looks like a tremendous result. But when you are told that to accomplish this the government has spent $10,000,000,000, all of which it owes and expects our children to pay back some day, you begin to wonder if we have traveled very far. Particularly do you wonder when you are reminded that, after this vast expenditure, there are still 10,500,000 people out of work and that relief rolls are increasing.

I have just had a few days in what is sometimes called the Bible Belt. There pious old farmers will tell you that Franklin D. Roosevelt was sent by God to get us out of our trouble. They do not explain how Jim Farley and Jesse Jones and Dan Roper got into the shipment. And more particularly they do not explain when God is going to send the ten billions to pay off this debt.

Mr. Moffett, the wizard who was going to put 5,000,000 men to work repairing old houses and who, I am told, is now hanging perilously near the big door marked "Exit," tells us that the depression is over but that people do not know it yet. One group of our great population that has not heard about the end of the depression is the brokers in Wall Street. For the last year and a half, brokerage firms have been disappearing by the consolidation method. The die-hards, hoping for the coming of happy days again, have held on, paying heavy overhead charges and watching partners, clerks, bookkeepers and customers' men sitting around working crossword puzzles. One by one they have tired of the game. Some have dropped out, many more have merged, two or three firms going together in order to cut down overhead; in a few cases the partners are performing some of the finer menial services themselves. But now the pressure is becoming unbearable.

As one wanders amid the quiet and even dismal precincts of the Exchange, it is hard to believe that all this gloom can have come in so short a time and that here, just eight years ago, the boys were celebrating the inauguration of President Hoover and preparing for one more wild ride in the market. Wall Street never liked Hoover, but it was pretty cheery down there that March day as the inventor of the two-chicken pot took office. There was one little speck upon the gayeties of that occasion, though it is now completely forgotten. The day following Hoover's inauguration, the names of the members of the Cabinet were sent to the Senate for confirmation—all save Andy Mellon's. That was withheld because a resolution was passed by the Senate to investigate his commercial and financial interests to determine whether or not he was qualified to hold office. The Secretary's affairs were duly investigated and he was held to be qualified. And now look at the great secretary. And look at Wall Street. Mr. Moffett really ought to go down to Wall Street personally and tell them that the depression is over. The poor boys are sadly in need of some cheering news.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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On the Labor Front

The Courts and 7a—Needed: a Labor Tribunal—15,000 Outlaws—Keeping Collars White

DURING the past few weeks the courts have been unusually helpful to employers in their efforts to prevent workers from organizing. While this is not a particularly novel role for the courts to play, they seem at present to be trying to establish a new record. The principles expressed in Section 7a apparently mean little or nothing to the judicial mind.

The outstanding instance, of course, is the adverse decision last week of Federal Judge John P. Nields in the Weirton case. This was the first major test on the meaning and enforceability of Section 7a and the chief point at issue was very simple. Did the Weirton Steel Company interfere with its employees' right of self-organization (as guaranteed in Section 7a) by sponsoring, and spending some $25,000 on, a company union? Incredibly, Judge Nields found no evidence of interference in such activity on the part of the employer. He even dismissed as irrelevant the fact that officials of the company union were being paid $25 a month extra. There was no evidence, he said, that such extra compensation, even though paid by the employer, had influenced the decisions of those who were supposed to be representatives of the steel workers and fighting for their rights. Clearly, the Weirton decision points to the need, as Chairman Biddle of the National Labor Relations Board has expressed it, of having an independent labor tribunal "such as is provided in the pending Wagner bill, which would determine such questions of fact in the light of special knowledge of the problems of labor relations."

But whether such a board can be established is now itself in doubt as a result of Judge Nield's decision. For in addition to giving the company union a clean bill of health, he ruled that Section 7a was "unconstitutional and void" as applied to manufacturing operations. The power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce, he declared, does not give it the right to regulate manufacturing. This opinion will undoubtedly be appealed, but if it is upheld by the Supreme Court it will invalidate virtually all of the labor provisions that have been established under the N.R.A. And it will, of course, make of dubious validity any further labor legislation—such as the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill—since all such legislation is based on the theory that labor relations affect interstate commerce and can, accordingly, be regulated by Congress.

In the hard-coal fields of Pennsylvania, near Wilkesbarre, where 15,000 miners have been on strike since January 30, Judge W. Alfred Valentine has also been trying to be helpful to the employers. A few weeks ago, in one of the most drastic anti-labor injunctions on record, he enjoined the strikers and "all other persons . . . from doing any act or thing intended to induce employees of the Glen Alden Coal Company to leave their employment." This order was tantamount to declaring the strike outlawed. The strikers, however, refused to return to work. Accordingly, Judge Valentine has threatened fifty-one officers and members of the union—the United Anthracite Miners of Pennsylvania—with contempt proceedings and last week placed them under a $50,000 bond, in cash, which will be used to compensate the Glen Alden Coal Company if it suffers any damage from the strike.

The striking union—organized in 1933—is a rival of the United Mine Workers of America and is composed chiefly of members who broke away from the U.M.W. because they felt its leaders were untrustworthy. A year ago the union called off a bitter strike and submitted its demand for recognition to arbitration, but the arbitration award was unsatisfactory. The present strike, called in protest against the action of the United Mine Workers in barring insurgents from two of the Glen Alden collieries, has resulted in widespread violence. Two pickets were recently shot to death by strikebreakers and many have been wounded.

In New York City, the growing militancy of workers, especially in the white-collar field, has also resulted in a number of court actions designed to frustrate unionization. Perhaps the most extraordinary decision of all is that of Supreme Court Justice Salvatore A. Cotillo in issuing an injunction last week against the picketing of a department store on the ground that white-collar workers have no right to organize for a closed shop. Retail clerks, he ruled, must have "ambition, imagination, industry and talent." These virtues, to his way of thinking, would be suppressed by a "union dictatorship." It is improbable that such reasoning will be upheld, since the Court of Appeals in New York State has repeatedly affirmed the right of peaceful picketing. In fact, only two days after Judge Cotillo's ruling, the Court of Appeals modified an injunction, issued early in January, against the picketing of shoe stores.

But obviously such appeals to the higher court are of little value to workers who have gone on strike. For in the meantime they are restrained from all effective strike activities and by the time the higher court has acted, the strike may be lost. The need in New York State, as in many others, is for legislation comparable to the federal Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act, which will prevent state courts from issuing injunctions against legitimate strike activities. Bills designed to afford labor this protection are now pending in many states—in Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island. It is up to the workers, organized and unorganized, to force the enactment of such legislation.

In the meantime, the formula hit upon by the Office Workers' Union in its strike at the Ohrbach Department Store in New York City is worth noting. It has set out to give a nuisance value to the injunction issued against mass picketing at the store. In the past few weeks, nearly 400 pickets have been arrested in mass demonstrations, but the union has continued to supply more recruits and sympathizers, to the consternation of the police and the courts. The charges of disorderly conduct against the pickets have, in most cases, been dismissed after perfunctory hearings. No doubt if the injunction is appealed, it will be reversed, but the Office Workers' Union is indisputably making the most of a bad situation.

WILLIAM P. MANGOLD.

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So Nice the Nellies

FOR THOSE who figured this picture "Forsaking *All* Others" the same way I did, knowing from the subject matter that it must be nothing to see, I have to bring in the late report that the show, by and large, is a good deal of fun and worth any price of admission up to thirty cents. The story is awful, but there is so much downright genius in the matter of handling separate pieces of business, such a lot of good gags and horseplay, that you follow it along quite merrily, not getting mad until afterwards, and then getting mad more at what is behind the picture than at the picture itself.

The story (a remade play) was not actually dictated by the strange tastes of professional hunters for decency, of course. But just the same it marks a high point in the effects of all such clean campaigning. It is crammed to the ears with the love tangle these romantic old biddies swoon to witness, and yet it is faced with the problem of constantly defining love as a game of ring-around-the-rosy. In general, this is one of Hollywood's basic headaches—the need for all this preoccupation with practically uncontrollable passions to the tune of all this frantic insistence that people in a passion simply do not go to bed. It isn't merely that such matters as might "give offense" are passed over warily: the producers have got to make more and more explicit that there never are any matters to give offense. And so, for lack of any truth to work on, they come in "Forsaking All Others" to a perfectly fantastic mix-up of pure motives and no motives at all.

When it opens, Joan Crawford is lying on a table being massaged and loves Robert Montgomery. Clark Gable is getting off a boat, glad to be back, and loves Joan. All three have known each other for twenty years and Robert loves Joan too and what's more will marry her on the morrow. So Clark says, Well, good luck, in brave but shaky tones, not revealing his twenty-year love; and then Robert gets hooked into marrying a siren by mistake. Joan, caught with her bridal veil down, goes around being brave and pals with Clark, who now refers openly to Robert as a perfect cad, and pretty soon it is revealed that Robert really loves Joan after all and Joan is so happy though bothered, and the two of them start going around having good fun, Clark now standing off and looking ominous. Things get even more so. Finally Robert divorces the siren, Joan prepares for their marriage (she has waited so long), and Clark prepares to get back on his boat, bravely. But first he must mention his love, so he mentions his love, and what do you think? Joan had loved him all along, all these twenty years, but had never guessed. So on the marriage morning Joan runs out on Robert and gets hitched to Clark on his boat, where I suppose they go on playing ring-around-the-handkerchief.

You can see how well managed a story like that has to be to keep everyone from walking out. It is merry by whole sequences; Charles Butterworth putting over such lines as, What was this he smelled, fresh air? is about priceless; and there is a strange (for the movies) crazy naturalness in such pieces of stock action as the fall on the wet sidewalk, the double-header into the pigpen, the fire-building and all. Director Van Dyke is so clever with his materials that it is an absolute shame we should be such a nation of yearning prissies as to make such a sad substitute for drama not only available material, but compulsory. You could never call me the friend of smut in the movies (those who, like George Jean Nathan, feel that there ever was any real smut there to take out merely give themselves away: they've been looking at stag shows); but I'm convinced whole shipments of frank smut into Hollywood would result in nothing worse than what we have now, and might make possible, at some remote future date, a story that derived its decency from being true and honest. I've held out pretty well so far, but I would like to break loose just once to tell all the Better Filmers you can find that their petticoat is out, their legs are pasted on the wrong end, not entirely by mistake, and shame on them altogether.

OTIS FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

Hobbies and Lobbies

SIR: Your article, "Mr. Farley's Stamp Act," in The New Republic of February 20 on Farley's "bonehead play" in giving his political friends small-sized fortunes in unusual stamp donations, has undoubtedly thrown a different light on the matter. Should our President have accepted Jim's first gift? Does Farley really believe such maneuvers will mean votes toward the New York governorship? If so, he has foolhardily overlooked the millions of persons earnestly interested in stamp collecting, a goodly percentage of whom live in New York.

Hobbies occupy an important position in our country today; anyone who offends the graces of one, brings condemnation and disfavor from other hobbyists. As Farley's "repentance list" cannot include all collectors, something might be done along the line of a return to two-cent postage rate, with F. D. Roosevelt's likeness on the new stamp Considering our now huge postal profits, this would at least make Farley a square, if not good guy.

Irvington, N. J. HAROLD A. MILLER.

SIR: A statement in your issue of February 20 undoubtedly conveys a false impression. In Mr. Taylor's article it is stated that Postmaster General Farley "started off producing freak sheets of stamps for President Roosevelt." Of course, President Roosevelt, a gentleman and a sportsman, as well as an official of the government, did not accept these gifts, involving a use of his position to gain an advantage over his fellow philatelists. Please make the correction in your next issue, unless you wish me to cancel my subscription to your valuable paper.

Chicago, Ill. PRO BONO PUBLICO.

Religions and the "Religious"

SIR: Mr. Norbert Guterman says in his notice of my book, "A Common Faith [The New Republic, February 20], that I ascribe "the diminishing influence of religions on our life to their intellectual inadequacies"; that I neglect their inadequacy with respect to their social function, and that consequently what I would put in their place "is a mere state of mind."

I do not know whether Mr. Guterman did not read my book, or whether his eyes having fallen upon its pages, he suffers from never having been able to learn to read. More space is devoted in my book to the inadequacies of religions in their social bearings than to their intellectual inadequacies, and the former are said to be more serious and more injurious. One-third of my short volume is expressly devoted to the social implications of what I would put in place of religions. Mr. Guterman's review is a good example of "a state of mind" substituted for objective fact.

New York City. JOHN DEWEY.

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A Correction

SIR: It has been called to my attention that in my review of The Congressional Record [The New Republic, February 20] I stated that Senator Bailey of North Carolina announced he was not afraid of a war between the United States and Japan because Japan would be in the position of a mouse doing battle with a full-sized cat. This statement was made, not by Senator Bailey, but by Senator Robert L. Reynolds. It is Senator Reynolds, also, who is known to his constituents as "Our Bob." I regret this error and am glad to be able to correct it.

New York City. HAMILTON BASSO.

Wine, Physic and Chromium

SIR: My book "Wine and Physic" has been twice misrepresented in The New Republic. Mr. Zabel calls it "a tedious defense of King's English" [December 12]. As I have steadily disagreed with his critical method, it would have been an embarrassment to please him unless I could first win him over from the use of such phrases as "King's English," which do not admit of clear definition. Probably he means the conservative tradition, which I was not defending. Mr. Zabel, dealing with the year's poetry, may have ignored the one hundred and twenty pages of prose that accompany my thirty-page *tour de force* in verse; but the prose discussion of standard usage (pages 114-122) is epitomized (page 24) in two clear enough lines:

> Temper the old gray iron of this English
> With chromium smelted from the current speech.

Is that a defense of King's English?

I do deplore the seemingly all-chromium vulgarities of an easy modernism, which will prove to have been so thinly chromium-plated that they could not have withstood the polishing that they seem never to get. For the method of so great an experimenter as Joyce, who does polish incessantly, I have expressed only praise. There was recently exhibited a miraculous clock that recites the "Gettysburg Address" at a set hour, and performs a daily rigmarole of similar triumphs. Joyce, it seems to me, shares that clock-maker's tragedy of great talent and fine material put to silly uses.

Of course it is difficult to be honestly critical in a few lines. Your original review of "Wine and Physic" [The New Republic, August 22] recalled to me an old doubt whether brief reviews are worth printing at all. Your reviewer used some of his scant space to say of me: "Among American writers he admires Mr. Dreiser, for his attempts to preserve 'the living rhythms of healthy speech.'" The phrase that the reviewer quotes was taken from another context on a different page. I did say (page 40) that the group that attempts to mirror the passing surface of life entire "finds its most conscientious exemplar in Theodore Dreiser, its cleverest in the anonymous writer for the 'confession' magazines." Even if the spirit of that dual reference is not obvious in the words, it is hardly an honest procedure to cite as the *sole* example of my admiration a writer for whom I have never expressed any admiration at all. . . .

London, Eng. ALEXANDER LAING.

Appeal from the Theatre Union

SIR: If the Theatre Union were an ordinary commercial project it would now have to declare itself insolvent and go out of business. Its low price scale—one of the main reasons for its success and a fundamental principle of the project—allows for such a narrow margin of safety that the continuance of the Union is now threatened. . . . Our liabilities are balanced by a tremendous asset—a large, stable, organized audience of over 100,000 people. "Sailors of Cattaro," our latest play, opened with a nine weeks' run guaranteed in advance. In "The Pit," by Albert Maltz, which we want to produce next, and "Strike Song," by Loretto and J. O. Bailey, which we schedule for the early fall, we believe we have the finest plays we have yet produced.

We believe that the Theatre Union, with the three plays it has so far produced, has built for itself in a little over a year a new and important place in the New York theatre. We want to continue this work, but our new play, as well as our existence as a producing organization, is threatened unless we can obtain immediate help from our friends. If you are one of them will you send contributions immediately in large or small amounts to Charles R. Walker, Treasurer of the Theatre Union, 103 West Fourteenth Street, New York City.

New York City. MARGARET LARKIN, Executive Secretary.

The Trouble with Labor

SIR: Your article "Labor's Best Tool" [The New Republic, January 30] in which you advocate education as a means to promote labor's position and general welfare prompts me, as a labor man, to say a few words. That there is urgent need for education among labor there is not a doubt, but education on how to run meetings, etc., will not solve labor's problems.

The trouble, it seems to me, is that labor is an offspring of our selfish system and it has, unfortunately, not sprung very far from the short-sighted principles of that system. . . . It is one thing to increase membership by telling people of the advantages of joining a union, but it is something else to make good those promises, even under normal conditions, and especially so when a hostile employer—and what employer is not hostile to union labor?—deliberately seeks to create dissension in labor's ranks. The solution of labor's destiny will not come through the present labor organizations, which at best only serve as a crutch. The real solution will come when our competitive system is abolished and replaced by a system of coöperation for the benefit of employer and employee, with work for everyone.

St. Joseph, Mo. BEN FARBSTEIN.

Thank Senator Norris

SIR: It is interesting to remember that but for the efficient opposition of Senator Norris of Nebraska to confirmation in the Senate of the nomination of Mr. Parker of North Carolina for the Supreme Court, Mr. Parker would have been Supreme Court Judge instead of Judge Roberts and the gold decision might have been the other way round.

Guilford, Conn. FRANCIS E. LANGDON.

Extracts from Letters

PAUL ROSENFELD, Lewis Mumford and Alfred Kreymborg write that they are planning to issue a new yearbook, to be called "Foreground," which "in general will follow the lines of the four 'American Caravans.' . . . We are looking for original, unpublished novels, plays, poems, stories and essays. There will be no restriction as to subject but no manuscript should exceed 50,000 words in length. . . . Manuscripts should be submitted in care of the publishers, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, between October 1 and December 31, 1935. . . . Acceptances will be announced before May 1, 1936."

Hugo A. Beiswenger, Jr., 912 Second Street, Jackson, Michigan, is making a survey of contemporary and recent radical organizations of the United States. He wishes copies of radical magazines, papers and pamphlets of any type of radical organization, no matter how small.

The Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, announces a poetry contest open to American citizens under thirty who have not previously published a volume of verse. The competition opens April 1 and closes May 1. Manuscripts of from forty-eight to sixty-four pages will be considered.

The Welfare Council of New York City announces that the Housing Exhibit recently shown at the Museum of Modern Art is available for exhibition in other cities. It contains models, plans, graphs, charts and photographic murals depicting housing conditions in the United States, city planning in some of the European countries and what is possible in the United States in low-cost housing and slum clearance. Carol Aronovici, chairman of the exhibit committee, will be glad to hear from those persons interested in having the exhibit shown in their community. Address him care of the Council, 122 East Twenty-second Street, New York City.

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Awake and Whistle at Least

Awake and Sing, by Clifford Odets. Belasco Theatre, February 19, 1935.

THERE are a number of pertinent things to be said of the Group Theatre's last production. It is, in the first place, a piece written by a member of the Group itself; and that is a notable point. The direction was under Mr. Harold Clurman, one of the heads of the Group, and it was good directing in general, intelligent, full of a stage sense, and thoroughly foreseen. I thought it needed only greater variations in pitch. The company in general shows growth; technically, the whole performance of the play is more even and distributed among the individual players than has often been the case in the past. The play itself deserves genuine attention critically.

"Awake and Sing" shows great promise, especially in the field of melodrama. It begins, moves along and develops with real skill. The attention it exacts is definite and constant. The only boredom I felt was with the recurring ugliness, sometimes so prolonged that I was led to wonder why I should bother with such people as these characters seemed to be.

This effect of stridency and ugliness, however, diminished after the first act. The growing intensity of the play replaced that yapping quality which, if spread throughout the household of characters, passes endurance. It is practically impossible to feel either the tragedy or the comedy of such rowing, jawing, prideless and uninspired human beings. This sort of judgment of that type of Jewish life seems to me necessary and right; how otherwise are we to measure and evaluate the nobler and more beautiful forms of Jewish life that are to be found? Any general front rigidly preserved, merely means that the lower Jewish forms of life gain, the higher lose.

"Awake and Sing" tells the story of a family, the Bergers, in the Bronx, whose daughter has slipped into perilous ways, and is beginning a baby. There is, also, a son, well written, whose mind is revolutionary but somewhat frightened: the maternal control these many years has been too strong. He has a girl, Blanche, an orphan without money, whom the mother fights. The Berger daughter is married off to a suitor who is all confusion, a wretched little sample of bourgeois goodness—which, plainly, is to be despised in this family that has always kicked about its chances. There is the old grandfather, full of Marx—however diluted with Caruso records (it is not easy to believe that Caruso's notions of Marxian principles would have accorded with this old man's). And there is a sort of bootlegger or free person of discolor, Moe Axelrod, who has been the first in the daughter's life, who comes to board, and who in the end carries the girl off, away from her husband, away from her baby. The grandfather assists in the son's future by making out his $3,000 insurance policy to him and then jumping off the roof; though, as a matter of fact, the son, well warned of his family's plans to cheat him, resolves to let them all have the paltry sum. Deserted by his girl, thrilled with the old grandfather's spirit, inheriting his handful of books, the young man determines to fight for the revolution, for good heat in the factory, the right to et cetera, et cetera. Meanwhile we hear uttered the sentence about all the bourgeois: "houses filled with hate!" Such houses crowd the length and breadth of the country; the revolution will change all that by giving such families as the Bergers a right to lie in the sun, to bring their children up as—it is not clear what. As to the hate-filled houses, I know so many that are not so that I remain a poor judge of the idea promulgated. I know a great many families where hate does not rule, some of them very close to me. I am reminded, also, that hate as a dramatic motif has small purpose unless it be conceived and portrayed either in most intense or tragic terms, not all mere commonness or envy.

As a workaday drama "Awake and Sing" seems to me far above the average. The author of it has talent, a sense of character drawing and a clear sense of emotional contrasts. The scene of the grandfather cutting the rich son's hair is genuine drama and is moving. What the play lacks is a deep basis in the dramatist's own conception. What life, beneath the incidental, has he in mind? What, for instance, does he think of their constant patter about getting on, in money, in advantages, when all the time there lie within his Jews' grasp their own marvelous inheritance? Are we to weep because this family that might have possessed one of the great racial traditions of the world, its poetry and prayer, are sour because they cannot have Packards? Where, for Mr. Odets, is the race's dream and shadow of divinity? From the dramatist's point of view we have a right to ask a more fundamental conception on his own part. On what, in his opinion, does this life that he portrays rest? The actual conveyance technically of the bases on which a play rests is a part of the dramatist's technical problem.

One comment remains on the playwright's achievement in "Awake and Sing," which is that it lacks tonality. The use of English at its best may be denied these aliens or these dwellers in the Bronx, whose agitations can so stridently take the charm out of life. But there is in Mr. Odets' play far too much of a certain vulgar animation of phrase, of forcing of the comparison and epithet, gutterism, as it were, that seeks after vivacity. Why not more either of the English language or of plain speech stumbling? For example, at the end, when the girl and her lover are going away, upsetting meanwhile a whole social system, why should not someone speak simply, in key, leaving vivacious vulgarity to those whose character it dramatically expresses? Theatre liveliness is one thing, but we do not sell out for it. If we do, we merely show that we passed through an important human scene like a spoon through soup, without perceiving the savor. You cannot have everything; if you wish to jazz, do please jazz; if you wish to stand by the wailing wall, then wail. But you must not be afraid that your matter will fail in liveliness for the vulgar, unless, that is, you think the enlivening element is its vulgarity. Watching the last scene of "Awake and Sing," I was unable to tell whether or not he thought of value the reactions to life of people who asked of life so little that is valuable or profound; or whether, with his young man's final curtain, the dramatist is thinking of revolution as one more stage cliché or as a pathetic canvas of possibility on which passionate or starved youth can begin to draw the pattern of the life it desires for itself.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

How Capitalism Breaks Down

A FASHIONABLE attitude among "educated" people is that of ridiculing Karl Marx as an ancient, bearded foreigner whose theories have been conclusively disproved. But those who adopt this attitude could not, for the most part, state Marx's theories accurately, to say nothing of disproving them. I suspect that there is almost as great a lack of precise knowledge concerning Marxian economics among his ardent defenders. It is therefore a stroke of rare good fortune that John Strachey has employed his extraordinary talents at explaining the subject.[1]

Every thinking person ought to understand this doctrine; it is not something that can be put aside as irrelevant. This is not merely because it is the foundation of a great revolutionary movement and thus has social and political significance, such as the teachings of Mohammed or Gandhi have, whatever their truth or falsity for us. Marx's economic theory offers a coherent explanation of what is happening today in the United States, and forms a basis for prediction of what the outcome will be. As Strachey points out, it is, in this respect, unique among systems of economics. The classical economists explain everything in the economic world—except depressions. Their doctrines leave no place for crisis. It is a commentary on the validity of their type of theory that it omits the most prominent and distressing phenomenon of the realm under observation. An astronomy that failed to account for the succession of the seasons would be equally suspect. The unorthodox economists, on the other hand, who do offer varied explanations of depression, either fail to fit these explanations into their systematic doctrine or have no system at all that deals with economics as a whole. In the eyes of those who demand consistent and rigorous thought, they seem like hopeless eclectics or rank amateurs.

They do seem this way to Strachey. He neatly introduces his book by demolishing several of the unorthodox remedies proposed, through applying to them the criticism made by the orthodox, the deductive and systematic economists who derive from classicism. His refutation of Major Douglas is the best I have ever read. He is not so successful with J. A. Hobson, because he does not present the Hobson theory in its latest and fullest form. But in general he successfully maintains the position, I believe, that while many of these mavericks offer a hint of what is the matter, their remedies would not work, because they would interfere with the normal and necessary operation of capitalism, as expounded by the accepted schools. In particular he relies on the analysis of Hayek, who serves Strachey's purpose well because Hayek is essentially deflationary and offers little hope either of abolishing depressions or of improving the general standard of living.

Strachey's exposition of the labor theory of value and of its corollary, surplus value, is a sustained and brilliant performance. It is hard reading, because the analysis is necessarily abstract and intricate. Since Marx's whole system of economic thought depends on these concepts, Strachey contends that it will not do to ignore them, or to accept the rest while discarding them. The labor theory of value stems from the same source as the classical theory itself; Ricardo held it. Ricardo's followers abandoned it because it offered no explanation of specific prices and profits. This, Strachey believes, was a cardinal theoretical error. He admits the truth of the criticisms of the theory made by those who followed the capitalist line, but contends that these criticisms are irrelevant to Marx's purpose, and indeed to the main and legitimate function of economic theory—which is to explain the behavior of the economic order *as a whole*. The orthodox theorists of value and price have been able to show why one price should be higher or lower than another, but in doing so they have been forced into a complete relativism that does not explain the actual substance of value, or the way the entire system acts, or what Marx calls the "law of motion" of capitalism.

This appears to be, at least on the basis of my first reading, a successful defense. The question remains, however, whether Marx's own explanation is adequate, and whether the conclusions he draws from it are valid, at least on the basis of his premises. There is no room here to argue so difficult and complex an issue. But it may be well to point out that Marx accepts many of the basic assumptions of the classical economists themselves, which seem to have little relevance to economic institutions as they exist today. He accepts the existence of competition as a main conditioning factor, the subsistence theory or "iron law" of wages, the existence of an "average profit," which all profits will approximate through a free flow of capital, and other similar assumptions of the systematic theorists. These conceptions have been less challenged in English and European economic writings than in the United States, and therefore it is natural that Strachey should pay little attention to the criticisms leveled at them. Like the neo-classicists themselves, he accounts for instances in which they do not seem to apply by considering these instances as variations from a prevailing norm. Nevertheless, statistical inquiries and studies of existing institutions have raised the question whether they are now even prevalent enough to supply a norm or give rise to a tendency.

It must be noted that if we reject Marx's theory because we believe the premises false, we must also apply the same judgment to the whole body of conservative capitalist theory. But, given his assumptions, are his conclusions correct? In particular, is his analysis of capitalist crisis valid? There is no denying that capitalism behaves as if it were. The rough confirmation of experience is overwhelming; it goes far to create a presumption against the possibility of flaws in the reasoning. But it is not conclusive. The recurrence of thunderstorms does not prove, as was long held, that God gets angry. I suspect that Marx was at least three-quarters right. But there appear to be in his theory, at least as explained by Strachey, certain inconsistencies I cannot account for. A good part of the time he does not seem to take into consideration the reduction of cost per unit of output that can occur simply by a fuller use of existing equipment, without reduction either of wages or of total capital charges. Nor does he take into account the same effect that can be produced by advancing technique. Higher productivity seems, with him, to be synonymous with (a) less labor income and (b) more capital investment, though conceivably it may lay the foundation for larger physical production at higher wages and lower prices, without preventing further increase of the means of production. If it does not lay this foundation, I am puzzled to

[1] The Nature of Capitalist Crisis, by John Strachey. New York: Covici, Friede, 400 pages. $3.

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know why a socialist economy, in which profits are registered and are used for the purchase of capital equipment (as in the Soviet Union today), is not headed as inevitably for crisis as capitalism is. I wish Strachey would turn his attention to answering such questions.

This does not mean that I believe industrial depressions can be abolished under capitalism, or that I think private employers will successfully apply the "economy of high wages." But it does explain why I think it is important to lay stress on socialist planning as the means of making our productive institutions serve social ends, rather than laying stress on Marx's difficult and somewhat shadowy economic analysis. The situation seems to me to be—in outline—as follows: whether or not Marx showed why a laissez-faire system must be subject to crises, we have today a system in which crises would be inevitable for other reasons, if not for those he assigns. These reasons, which I have dealt with extensively elsewhere, are indissolubly connected with the control of production, wages and prices by those seeking private profit. We have the basis for a collective economy; it runs badly because it is not controlled for collective purposes and by collective instruments, and probably cannot be so controlled as long as private ownership of the means of production is the prevailing system. The growth of a consciousness that it can be so run under socialism, and of the purpose to do so, is the really important matter.

GEORGE SOULE.

Straight Tragedy

Follow the Furies, by Eleanor Carroll Chilton. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.

IN BALD words, this is the story of a girl who kills her own mother when she realizes that the disease from which she suffers will soon progress from immobility to idiocy, and who is so frightened by the consequences of her act that within a year she kills herself. That is the story; and Miss Chilton was courageous to attempt it, for after it was written it could be only one of two things—a tale for the tabloids or straight tragedy. But Miss Chilton's intelligence and wisdom and genial penetrating humor were as great as her courage. And in her story of Barbara Hinton she has not only produced one of the most beautiful and readable of American novels, but she has pleaded the cause of an entire generation that is so completely "lost" that it knows no signposts by which to guide its life. For Barbara Hinton was reared by an intelligent, benevolent, "emancipated" father, who was a famous novelist. He taught her to think for herself and when she was sixteen years old he gave her for a birthday present Havelock Ellis' "Studies in Sex." But not until Barbara Hinton was twenty years old, and was already responsible for her mother's death, did she learn that the world outside her cloistered, "reasonable" Connecticut home considered certain deeds sinful and that she herself had committed the worst sin of all.

It is futile to try to give the plot of "Follow the Furies" and to describe all the characters that are in it. But, with all the sentimentality and self-pity and slime that constitute so much of current fiction, it is worth while to say simply that Eleanor Carroll Chilton has written a book which for insight, beauty and sheer intelligence can stand up against the best fiction of its time in this or any other land. There are not many living Americans of whom this can be said.

GRACE ADAMS.

A Man's House

Modern Housing, by Catherine K. Bauer. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 393 pages, 200 illustrations. $5.

NO ONE interested in housing can afford to miss this book. It combines the lucidity and raciness that interest the layman, with the completeness, grasp and thoroughness that the expert requires. It should arouse technicians from their preoccupation with minutiae, and quicken them with renewed inspiration. And it should effectually stir those who are not yet interested in the subject, who do not yet understand the possibilities of good housing for themselves and their children. For what Miss Bauer emphasizes is that housing is not a question of a few models, a few hateful, condescending sops, but a whole sensible way of life. It is a question requiring the political action of large numbers of people: what has to be overcome is not only general inertia, but the purblind opposition of interests holding to a set of values that actually do not exist.

Miss Bauer does not restrict herself to such hackneyed phrases as "social desirability," but tells what good housing means in terms of our daily lives; she translates it quantitatively into belts of parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, schools conveniently placed, sunshine and air, pleasant vistas; she stipulates the permanent control that is vital if these are not to disappear. Excellent photographs, plans and graphic tables show how desirable features were integrally included in Europe, where 4,500,000 dwellings of high quality for medium and low-income groups have been erected since 1919; while we, with roughly the same total population and in an unprecedented building boom, have erected some 20,000. We built vast quantities of apartment houses for the wealthy and small houses for the less wealthy, but even there we did practically nothing comparable in standard with what Europe did for those much lower in the economic scale. That is why Miss Bauer had to examine Europe's work, and show how it would be applicable here. She realistically divides the housing problem into two sections. First, what can be accomplished within the frame of capitalism? (This is what Europe had to face, capitalism having found that it could no longer afford the initial wastes and rapid deterioration characteristic of private development, and that it had to make land and housing a public charge.) Second, what is to be done about housing for that lower 40 percent of the people whom only Russia is attempting to take care of on a big scale? Miss Bauer's clear exposition will be helpful in the first phase. Of equal importance is her demonstration that subsistence homesteads do *not* furnish a solution for the second part of the question. Where subsistence homesteads are lucky enough to attract industry, they will be nothing better than the old company town; in most cases they will be company towns without even a company to furnish employment to their occupants, who will be virtually peasants, tied to a plot of land too small to support them decently.

There should be a cheap reprint of "Modern Housing," for many people who will need it cannot afford to pay the price of $5. In any case it should be required reading for college courses on current affairs and for adult education groups, and it should also be available immediately in all trade unions, coöperative societies and public libraries. As for architects and students—I consider the chapter on architecture the best architectural criticism written in this country in recent years.

ALBERT MAYER.

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Francis of France

Francis the First, by Francis Hackett. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 448 pages. $3.

IN HIS "Henry VIII" Mr. Hackett indicated his view of his art as biographer in the words: "To be *then-minded,* to use imagination and intuition to suggest life—this is the task of the psycho-historian." He has maintained this conception in the present volume with greater fullness of illustration and interpretation. England in the early sixteenth century was on the outskirts of Europe, and the Renaissance to the court of Henry VIII was only a brilliant morning. The France of his contemporary, Francis I, stood in the high noon of the movement, which in Italy was going down in a cloudy and threatening sunset. Already the artists of the peninsula were turning to France as a place of safety, honor and reward—Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini. Architecture was the mirror of French court life, and at Amboise, Chambord, Blois, the valley of the Loire became the smile of the Renaissance that was fading on the Tiber, the Arno, the Po. The exuberance of earthly delight was exhibited in Rabelais, and at the same moment the terror of eternal vengeance was molding the stern faith of Calvin. Never was there a reign bigger with promise and prophecy than that of Francis the First.

Francis was the first king of modern France. Charles VII with the help of Joan of Arc had cleared out the English and ended the Hundred Years' War. Louis XI had helped to destroy Burgundy to the east, but there still remained undetermined frontiers toward Flanders and Savoy. England held Calais. The duchy of Brittany and the kingdom of Navarre were practically independent, and in the center of France a great vassal, the Constable de Bourbon, held an appanage that tempted him to conduct himself as an independent power. Francis profited by the policy of his predecessors in consummating the unity of his realm, but he inherited from them the fatal claims to Milan and Naples, which brought him into collision with Spain and the Empire. These determined his foreign policy and promoted his wars, which began so auspiciously at Marignano, and at Pavia sank to defeat and capture, a peace of compulsion and a broken faith. Meanwhile the domestic policy of bringing France out of the feudal system into absolute monarchy went forward, with, however, a still more dangerous threat to its unity arising in the conflict between Calvin and the Sorbonne, between Huguenots and Catholics. As Mr. Hackett remarks in one of his passages that suggest "now-mindedness": "The Europe which passed from feudalism to national sovereignty through the furnace of the Reformation had no handy method for dealing with religious enthusiasm, any more than the national sovereign states today have a handy method of socializing industry."

Mr. Hackett makes politics the warp of his woven narrative; the woof is furnished by the brightly and so diversely colored threads of personalities. There is Francis himself, a double-faced character though simple in his ambiguity—a type of warlike chivalry insisting on being knighted at the hands of Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche,* on the field of Marignano, and a man of the Renaissance, reaching out for beauty in every form—women, pictures, buildings, jewels, costumes, pageants. His court resembled that of a despot of Milan or Ferrara in its atmosphere of caprice, suspicion and crime. He was constantly betraying or being betrayed by his servants—Semblançay his treasurer, Trivulzio his general, Bourbon, Montmorency. His eldest son was perhaps poisoned. His mistress, Françoise de Foix, after Francis had abandoned her, was perhaps killed by her husband's orders. That husband was perhaps killed in his turn. But the atmosphere was Gallic, not Italian. Mr. Hackett has this difference in mind in recalling the story of Brantôme, to the effect that the Seigneur de Bonnivet, surprised by Francis in a visit to the latter's mistress, took refuge in the fireplace, screened by leafy boughs, into which the monarch, his immediate desire fulfilled, freely made water. Another situation of this Renaissance court was suggested when old Louis XII, to whom Francis stood next in succession, married Mary Tudor. "Francis could not keep away from Mary Tudor. She enchanted him. His mother watched his infatuation with growing alarm. If he really seduced her, the throne might pass to his own son."

That mother, Louise of Savoy, who watched so eagerly while one life after another that stood between her son and the throne was extinguished, might have been spared this last anxiety. While Francis was absorbed in his Italian adventure she was engaged in the more useful business of strengthening the monarchy at home. It was her maladroit proposal to marry the Constable de Bourbon in order to bind his feudal possessions safely to the crown, that drove the proud vassal into conspiracy and rebellion, so that his estates fell to the crown after all. But her devotion to Francis was only a glowing coal compared to the flame of his sister Marguerite. Marguerite married twice for Francis and for France, to the Duc D'Alençon and to the King of Navarre, but her real passion was for her brother. She is the supreme French woman of the age, as Vittoria Colonna is the Italian, and Mr. Hackett pictures her with even more than his usual verve. In the "Heptameron" she has fixed imperishably the joyous flowering of the French Renaissance, which she was to see touched by the frost of Calvinism. From a love that stopped this side of being profane she soared to a mysticism that was sacred. "Hers seemed a contrary course to everything about her, as if the moon were sailing through a sky against a streaming pack of clouds. And as the cloud-floes swept over Marguerite heavy with disillusion, she ever and again emerged in clearer spaces, the heavens in festival and this moon a queen. . . . She was at once fleeting and illumined, beyond the world and of it." Her star was Clément Marot, as Rabelais was the morning star of Francis.

Mr. Hackett is concerned with more than France. Europe, of which France was becoming the center and of which Francis had so inadequate a comprehension, is his major theme. As European figures he sets in illuminating opposition Machiavelli and Erasmus, Luther and Rabelais, Loyola and Calvin, and with a force of pithy statement he fixes them unforgettably in the picture. "Rabelais, in his own way, is a Gothic cathedral. One sees, first of all, the gargoyles." Calvin is concerned, "not with the trivial mathematics of the universe, but with the sines and cosines of eternity." Of Machiavelli and Erasmus he says: "One distrusts the universe: the other trusts it. Machiavelli runs the risk of hatred: Erasmus runs the risk of good will. Each is intelligent, one with grim exactitude, the other with vivid impressionableness. Machiavelli is the more detached of the two, but Erasmus has bestowed himself on Europe with infinitely larger spirit." These portraits and studies in analytic detail merge into the larger synthesis in which Mr. Hackett shows a power of generalization lighted by imagination. Of the antinomy between Francis and his people he remarks: "He strives to impose

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a state while France develops a civilization." And of this State, and the Church it inherited, he says, with insight that is prophetic: "What the Renaissance offered to human understanding was a release of energy out of all proportion to the institutions that are supposed to contain and harmonize the liberated man."

We have waited six years for Mr. Hackett's second work of psycho-history, but not in vain. The diligence involved in collecting and testing the materials, the scholarly workmanship in assembling them, the architectural skill in constructing the edifice and the imagination that illumines it are ample justification of the author's delay, and the result is a reward for our patience. To these high qualities must be added the final merit of a style that enhances and vivifies—that adds, as it were, tactile values to the picture. At times, it is true, Mr. Hackett's compressed narrative results in an ellipsis that gives the reader pause, while it challenges his attention. Mr. Hackett's intelligence expresses itself in brief, compact sentences that have the force of epigrams; but his appreciation finds utterance in more sustained rhythms, of which his description of Chambord is a gorgeous example:

> Chambord is a wave rolling in on a shallow beach. Considering the flat country in which this isolated chateau was to stand there was every chance for it to inhabit it insipidly. But Chambord is at once severe and multitudinous. It frankly refuses to ascend. It rolls out of the plain subordinate to the long horizon. But no more does it submit humbly to the earth. At either end it rounds into a massiveness capped by a point, while in the center, stabilized by twin towers, it mounts into a froth of detail that has the lantern for its peak, the wave caught at that spontaneous moment when it has broken into foam. This movement at the center is an effervescence of old France, sportive, complex, vivacious, a scherzo in stone. It has something of that spirited improvisation which makes the staircase at Blois a happy affront to tradition, a winding gesture of defiance.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Men Without Women

Sex in Prison, by Joseph Fulling Fishman. New York: National Library Press. 256 pages. $3.

IN AN age increasingly characterized by its realistic approach to social problems, it was high time that someone should tell the plain, unvarnished tale unfolded in Mr. Fishman's book. A man of many years' experience in exploring the social sewers that pass muster as jails, the author lays bare a topic that has too often been spoken of in whispers, or altogether ignored, or treated most ineptly. While the book is not outfitted with the scholarly paraphernalia of elaborate footnotes, statistics and copious references to medico-pathologic literature, it is a straightforward account by a man who can speak authoritatively. Both the normal and pathologic manifestations of the sex impulse, as it seeks expression behind bars, are frankly discussed. Most important, the author points out that much of the disciplinary task of the prison, as reflected in temper outbursts, assaults, trickery, bribery and the like, traces back to society's futile attempts to put shackles on powerful impulses of the human organism.

The morbid psychology of prison life is made up of many elements; and Mr. Fishman wisely avoids the pitfall of treating his subject *in vacuo*. He stresses the tragic idleness of the inmates of county jails and of many prisons; he indicates the foolish ineptitude of the provisions regarding visits of friends and relatives to prisoners; he shows that prison avenues of sublimation of the sex impulse are themselves frequently unsuited to their purpose; and he illumines his observations with pointed summaries of case histories. For obvious reasons, I should have liked to see a sound psychoanalyst collaborate with Mr. Fishman in his study.

In considering what society can do about the problems of sex in prison and the secondary difficulties they draw in their wake, Mr. Fishman stresses the fact that "many of these conditions are not fundamentally inherent in penal institutions, but exist by virtue of a long continued practice based, to a considerable extent, upon current morals and false and puritanical attitudes pertaining to sex matters." He points to the

> . . . well founded truth that most foreign countries face the realities of sex more openly than we do. . . . These countries have, both in and out of their prisons, established broad policies which are designed to solve the sexual problem in the simplest way; that is, by permitting its overt expression to be along lines ordained by nature.

Mr. Fishman discusses the methods of solving the problem of sex in prison that are employed in Russia and Salvador. He is in favor of a modified application of the Russian system of granting periodic vacations to qualified prisoners, and effectively answers the arguments against the practice. The chief advantages of the system are that it would maintain the ties of family life, "save the prisoner perhaps from becoming temporarily or permanently homosexual, prevent him from acquiring personality defects due to sex suppression."

The matter of sex life in prison is part and parcel of the larger problem of the principles and practices of our penocorrectional regime. The intelligent criminologist has long known that the regime is full of internal inconsistencies, that it is ill designed, that it is badly administered. The time has arrived for seriously considering a complete recasting of the system from top to bottom. But the point to stress is that it is not systems or buildings or laws that are the heart of the matter; it is personnel. When our fellow citizens become informed enough to demand that their vehicles of criminal justice be staffed by competent public servants, they will be grown up enough to look objectively upon such reforms as Mr. Fishman recommends.

SHELDON GLUECK.

Books in Brief

Mobilizing for Chaos: The Story of the New Propaganda, by O. W. Riegel. New Haven: Yale University Press. 231 pages. $2.50.

THE MAIN thesis of this truly remarkable book may best be given in the author's own words: "Technological progress has so far outstripped political progress that the world is putting its international nervous system to uses which are the very opposite of international." Mr. Riegel, a trained newspaper man, has grasped one of the most fundamental and least generally realized truths of modern times: that human societies are not only dependent upon, but virtually controlled by, the technical apparatus at the disposal of the state. He proceeds to illustrate this with a wealth of information on the world development of telegraph, telephone and cable networks, "radio armaments" and their sinister possibilities, and the ramifications

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of the various "international" news services. With regard to radio alone, the increasingly nationalist tendencies take on a very somber character: everywhere the state is capturing this most effective of all tools of propaganda and is using it to create "a modern Babel." Financial, economic, political and cultural rivalries center round the communication systems of the world: presently, Mr. Riegel informs us (citing chapter and page from innumerable documents) these systems will form the spinal column of the next war. All of this is told without a hint of sensationalism, from stores of cold fact, in a book that should be read by every student of current affairs, no matter what his political faith. H. W.

Spider Woman, by Gladys A. Reichard. New York: The Macmillan Company. 300 pages. $3.50.

Learning to weave in a Navajo family, Dr. Reichard sat on the ground as did the Indian women, and her book is written as from this familiar and intimate point of vantage. She lived in a dugout, and for four summers was in friendliest touch with a single family and its many connections. The results of councils were told to her; she heard gossip and legends and chants, watched ceremonials, saw the "killing of the ghost" and a war dance. The intricate, beautiful and transient art of sand-painting was spread before her again and again. Dr. Reichard does not attempt to encompass anything more than her personal experiences, the unpretentious charm of her book lying in the naturalness with which these are revealed. The many photographs used by way of illustration are always interesting and include some fine character studies—particularly of Navajo women and children—and glimpses of the Arizona desert, again as from the weaver's seat or the hogan.

C. R.

Oscar Wilde Twice Defended, from André Gide's Wicked Lies and Frank Harris's Cruel Libels, by Robert Harborough Sherard. Chicago: The Argus Book Shop. 76 pages. 75 cents.

The ostensible purpose of this brochure is contained in its title: the uproarious farce of its contents has to be read to be appreciated. The old names that attend the poor remains of Wilde—Harris, Douglas, Turner, Ross, etc.—all, all are here again in the most rhodomontade style since anybody. Esperanza is resurrected, Shaw is put in his place and Gide's popularity in Germany is explained on the grounds of specially regimented relaxation in Hitler's concentration camps. The stiff purple paper enclosing the defensive efforts of this friend of Wilde scarcely does justice to the empurpled prose. K. W.

Myself, by John R. Commons. New York: The Macmillan Company. 201 pages. $3.

John R. Commons, Professor Emeritus of the University of Wisconsin, relates how his contributions to economic theory grew out of his experience as printer, trade-unionist, farmer, investigator, state and federal commissioner, statistician, teacher and proponent of social legislation. Accidents of fate played an interesting part in the evolution of his thought—when his chair at Syracuse was abolished because he had incurred the disapproval of the moneyed benefactors of the university, he realized that wealth consists not in *holding* useful things but in *withholding* them from those who need them. Reverses that would have crushed another man were the very grist for his theorizing mill; his attitude toward life has been a compound of eager curiosity, amused tolerance and patient receptiveness; and he paints his self-portrait with frankness and sly humor but without a trace

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of sophistication. The book throws a peculiarly intimate ray of light on the Marxian hypothesis that the character of the scientific superstructure is determined by the composition of the economic subsoil. K. F.

Highland Night, by Neil M. Gunn. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

In the chapter of "Capital" that deals with Primary Accumulation, Marx speaks of the Highlands as "that promised land of modern romantic literature," and then shows what happened in the promised land when the Gaels were forcibly expropriated from the soil during the systematic "clearing of estates." This is the background of Neil Gunn's novel—a major theme, and worked out with a fine understanding of the historical and economic forces that shaped the period. However much the author glorifies the old Gaelic way of living, he never lapses into facile lamentation for its passing, and never betrays those yearnings for some rustic golden age that make the work of so many other writers who deal with the simple life merely nostalgic and unhistoric. The old life was good. It is recreated in the novel with a wealth of sensitive and living detail. But it was also doomed, because the political cohesion, the old feudal unity, had gone out of it. And it was this lack of any political consciousness around which their rebellion might crystalize that made the Highlanders submissive and helpless before the inhuman advance of what the English factors called "progress." The novel is soundly Marxian, but to say this may be to slur its literary excellence. Neil Gunn has, in fact, done a rare thing: he has written a novel in which there is an explicit analysis of the economic background, without in the least surrendering the novelist's prerogative of dealing in terms of character and mood and emotion. G. D.

Contributors

PEGGY BACON's drawing of Gertrude Stein in this issue is the sixth of a series she is doing for The New Republic.

H. N. BRAILSFORD, the London correspondent of The New Republic, is the author of several books, including "Property or Peace," published last fall by Covici-Friede.

CARLETON BEALS has visited most of the Central and South American countries and has written about many of them. He is the author, among other books, of "Banana Gold," "The Crime of Cuba" and "Fire on the Andes." He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1931.

HILDE ABEEL has published short stories and a novelette in Manuscript Magazine. She lived for some time in Vienna, several years ago.

GRACE ADAMS is the author of "Psychology: Science or Superstition," and "Your Child Is Normal," a study in child psychology.

ALBERT MAYER has acted as consultant in housing in various governmental agencies.

SHELDON GLUECK is a professor of Criminology at the Harvard Law School. He is the author of "Mental Disorder and the Criminal Law," and co-author, with Mrs. Glueck, of "Five Hundred Criminal Careers" and other books.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Harold Ward, Constance Rourke, Kenneth White, Karel Ficek and Gertrude Diamant.

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